The Middlebury Campus

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CITING LOW WAGES AND 'VOICELESSNESS,' SOME FACILITES STAFF PUSH FOR UNION

By **SABINE POUX**
Editor in Chief
and SADIE HOUSBERG
Managing Editor

After wrapping up its year-long workforce planning initiative this May, a process that saw 37 staff members take voluntary buyouts and caused a redistribution of workload among remaining staff, administrators announced via email to all college employees that the process had been a success — the college could reduce its deficit without resorting to layoffs.

But an external email sent to facilities staff on Aug. 8 suggests the starkly different story, that some workers didn't think workforce planning had been so "voluntary" after all.

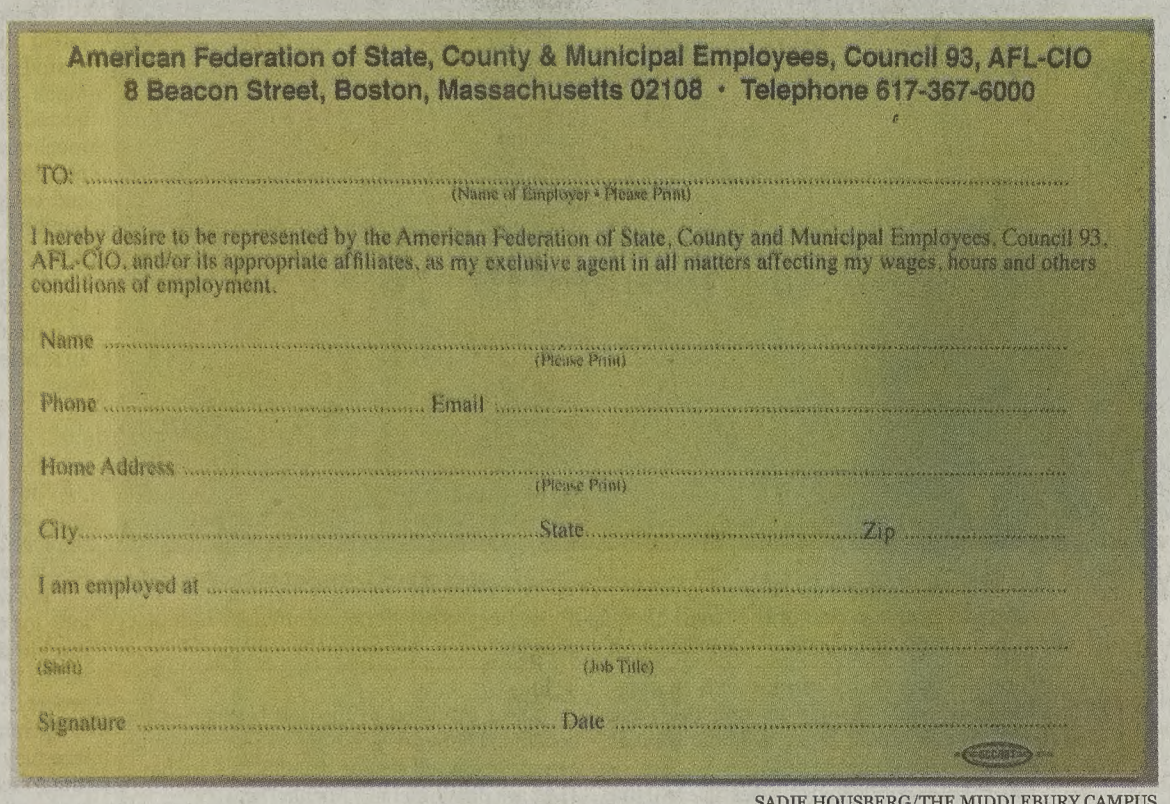
"Middlebury Needs a UNION! -read on your break" the subject line of the email said.

It spelled out some of the pitfalls of the workforce planning process: Staff felt voiceless, overworked with insufficient pay, and as though the ground had been pulled from beneath them when they were offered buyouts and switched into new roles. Facilities staff specifically — those who work in maintenance and operations jobs, like custodial and groundskeeping services, as well as jobs in planning, design and construction — have reported to The Campus feeling exhausted and frustrated by failures in communication, too-long hours and last minute call-ins.

"I don't know a bunch about unions — still don't," one facilities staff member said. "But I know the way that people get treated here. I've seen it. I just feel like we've got to do something."

Throughout the summer, the email's sender, David Van Deusen of the Rutland-based branch of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), met with facilities staff who sought to discuss how organizing a union would mitigate the heightened voicelessness brought on by the workforce planning process.

Not enough facilities staff have signed union authorization cards to trigger a vote to organize. Many said they see this as a sign that union efforts have failed. But Van Deusen remains adamant that efforts are ongoing. And facilities staff are insistent that something has to give.



American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees, Council 93, AFL-CIO
8 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108 • Telephone 617-367-6000

TO: .....
(Name of Employer • Please Print)

I hereby desire to be represented by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Council 93, AFL-CIO, and/or its appropriate affiliates, as my exclusive agent in all matters affecting my wages, hours and others conditions of employment.

Name .....
(Please Print)

Phone ..... Email .....

Home Address .....
(Please Print)

City ..... State ..... Zip .....

I am employed at .....

(Shift) (Job Title)

Signature ..... Date .....

SADIE HOUSBERG/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Authorization cards, like the one above, were distributed to some facilities staff starting this summer. At this juncture, not enough cards have been returned to the union representative to warrant moving forward with the effort.

Most of the 12 facilities workers The Campus spoke with for the story spoke on the condition of anonymity, for fear of retribution from peers and upper management.

Workforce planning raises "unanswered questions"

Most Middlebury students don't know what workforce planning really means. But for staff, the process — which the college announced in June 2018 as a way to cut personnel costs and distribute work more efficiently — was ever-present for the better part of a year.

Department managers were tasked last fall with leading discussions within their divisions about how they could reorganize work more efficiently and cost-effectively, with the aim of shrinking staff compensation costs by 10% amidst an exigent budget deficit. That winter, senior leadership, in collaboration with human resources, finalized a list of positions that they would cut based on those findings.

The college identified 150 staff positions to be eliminated, though 100 of that number were "were already vacant through attrition and restrictions on re-hiring over the last few years," The Campus reported in May. In February of 2019, the college handed out applications for buyouts — formally called Incentivized Separation Plans (ISP) — to 79 staff members, in hopes of cutting 45 of the remaining positions. Twenty-eight of those applications were offered to facilities and dining staff specifically.

The college sent more applications for the buyouts than were necessary, in the hopes that enough staff would elect to take them and the college would not have to resort to involuntary layoffs. If more staff than necessary applied, the most senior staff were offered buyouts first.

The college also created "close to 40" new staff positions based on needs identified during work reevaluations, according to Vice President of Human Resources Karen Miller. Applications for those positions were first made available to the staff who were offered buyouts, giving them the option to apply to stay at the college, rather than taking ISPs. To protect the privacy of the individuals who opted to take buyouts, the college has not made public the list of eliminated and added positions.

Ultimately, 37 staff took the buyouts, nine of whom were employees within facilities and dining. The college had hoped more staff would apply, but the number proved sufficient — the college did not have to resort to layoffs.

"This process has been both lengthy and challenging, and caused many in our community significant uncertainty and discomfort," said President Laurie Patton in a May email to staff. "Thanks to your participation, the process was successful."

Last year, The Campus reported growing anxieties among staff as they waited to hear from the administration about the futures of their jobs. For staff in some departments — like dining, in which a natural reduction of positions left few to be forcibly cut — these uncertainties have since mostly subsided. But in facilities, anxieties have subsisted. In some cases, they have worsened.

"There were a lot of unanswered questions. There still are a lot of unanswered questions," said one Middlebury facilities staff member, a supporter of the union.

A 2017 survey, administered by the consulting firm ModernThink, shows that staff discontent surged even before workforce planning began. That survey showed frustration with communication from the Senior Leadership Group — Patton's 17-member advisory council — a lack of transparency with decision-making and dissatisfaction with compensation, among other areas.

Still, workforce planning seems to have exacerbated many staff concerns. Some, for example, are frustrated with how work has been redistributed since some positions were cut, which has caused employees to feel overworked and underpaid.

"The work amped up with fewer people to do it," said the aforementioned facilities staff member. "A lot of the extra stuff is taking away from the stuff that we need to do daily."

The worker said he was frustrated

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ResLife rewrite: 30-year old commons system axed

BENJY RENTON/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Residential life staff posed with the Ross Rhino — the Ross Commons mascot — during MiddView orientation. The elimination of the commons system in the upcoming school year will mean the end of Ross as a residential unit.

By **ARIADNE WILL**
Senior Writer

The commons system will no longer exist come next fall, the college administration announced in an email to the Middlebury community on Oct. 24.

The email detailed a host of changes to the current residential life system following a multi-year review of the system, including the creation of a new Office of Residential Life, a push to work towards building a new student center, and the consolidation of deans' offices into two first-year "clusters." All together, the administration is calling the changes "BLUEprint."

The review process, which started to take shape in spring 2018, originated in Community Council in 2017, after a New York Times article about income inequality inspired the council to conduct a student survey . The survey ultimately pointed to discrepancies in residential life experiences among students. The following year, an external committee convened to build the report that would eventually become "How Will We Live Together." The report's recommendations informed the upcoming overhaul.

Currently, first-year students live in one of five first-year halls, depending on their assigned commons. Per the new system, first-years will instead either live in Allen and Battell halls on the north side of campus, or Stewart and Hepburn halls south of College Street, depending on which "cluster" they are in. These changes will turn Hepburn from a sophomore dorm to a first year dorm, while removing first years from Hadley, a first-year dormitory located in the Ross complex.

Administrators chose to move first-years nearer to each other in

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Trustees convene; discuss end of commons system, second student constituent overseer

By **RILEY BOARD**
News Editor

In its first meeting of the academic year, the College Board of Overseers (CBO), a committee within the Board of Trustees, discussed changes to the commons system, student-faculty relationships, future funding campaigns and enrollment at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS).

When they visited campus, the more than 30 current trustees who serve on the board mingled with staff and students and discussed the board's agenda. The board votes on proposals for budgetary changes that fall "outside of the normal process," according to President Laurie Patton.

Patton recently wrote an installment for the SLG (Senior Leadership Group) Corner column that elaborated on the responsibilities and goals of trustees. Although board meetings are not open to the public and their content is confidential, Patton and Board Chair George Lee '88 P'20 spoke to The Campus about the focus and structure of the most recent meeting.

"We meet in Wilson Hall, the boardroom, the library and while walking with each other through campus," Patton and Lee said in a joint email to The Campus. "Board members met with students, faculty, and staff as well." They noted that after the meetings, many board members attend athletic games or spend time in town.

For their October retreat, the

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Related staff coverage

Independent contrators fill gaps as college struggles to fill 16 custodial vacancies

By NORA PEACHIN, Page 2

Middlebury voted to divest. What happens now?

By **AMELIA POLLARD**
Digital Director
and ZACH LEVITT
Contributing Writer

Editor's note: This is the first installment of a four-part series assessing Energy 2028 — Middlebury's ambitious environmental plan announced in January. Here, we look into the leadup to divestment and the next steps. Check out our interactive version of the article online.

After a decade-long crusade of student activism, Middlebury has begun its long march toward divestment. In a unanimous decision last January, the Board of Trustees approved Energy 2028 — an ambitious and sweeping plan that promises certain reductions of the college's environmental footprint in response to the mounting climate crisis. With the vote, the board set a timeline for meeting a series of environmentally-minded goals and initiatives.

In terms of divestment, the first of these dates was Aug. 1 of this year, when the college pledged to halt all new direct investments in the fossil fuel industry. The college currently has 5.1% of its endowment directly invested in fossil fuels — a dollar amount of $53.5 million. Looking ahead, the college plans on divesting that sum in stages — 25% reduction by 2022, 50% by 2027, and a total 100% by 2034.

According to 350.org, a Middlebury-founded national environmental organization, about 40 U.S. educational institutions have divested thus far. And Middlebury's commitment is more extensive than many others (Columbia and Stanford have pledged only to divest from coal companies). The college will divest not only from companies whose core business is oil and gas production, but also those that are involved on the infrastructure end, whether through equipment, pipelines or services.

The Middlebury divestment campaign began in 2011, but gathered steam over the past few years. Waves of students have adopted the cam-

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Independent contrators fill gaps as college struggles to fill 16 custodial vacancies

By NORA PEACHIN
News Editor

A team of four independent contractors began cleaning nearly all of the small residential spaces on campus on Oct. 14. This shift came as a result of ongoing custodial staff shortages.

Associate Director of Facilities Services Missy Beckwith, who is in charge of processing resignations and new hires, said the number of vacancies has increased over the past few years.

"I've been here for a long time and this is the first time that I remember having as many openings as we do," said one custodian, who The Campus will refer to as Jane. All interviewed custodians requested anonymity, for fear of retribution from the college.

Staff shortages have caused Custodial Services "to be inconsistent with the level of service we are able to provide," according to an email Beckwith sent to employees in Facilities and Custodial Services, Public Safety and commons coordinators on Friday, Oct. 11.

"We felt the need to fix this quickly in order to provide an acceptable level of service and to manage the workload and stress level for our staff," she continued.

The small residential spaces, mostly small houses owned by the college like Homestead and 97 Adirondack View, were selected to be cleaned by contractors to improve efficiency.

So far, independent contractors Diego Silva and Justin Smith have had generally positive experiences at the college. They described the small houses as "pretty light upkeep" and "upscale."

A second custodian, who The Campus will refer to as Michael, felt positively about the addition of contracted workers.

"My team has been affected [by staff shortages]. For a while there, it was pretty bleak. Over time, you do notice the neglect. With the contracted workers, it's given us more people," he said.

However, a third custodian, who The Campus will refer to as Sarah, was disappointed by the change.

"We get close to our students in the small houses," she said. "We miss that. We have relationships with our students in our dorms, but when you have little houses you can chat with students while you clean."

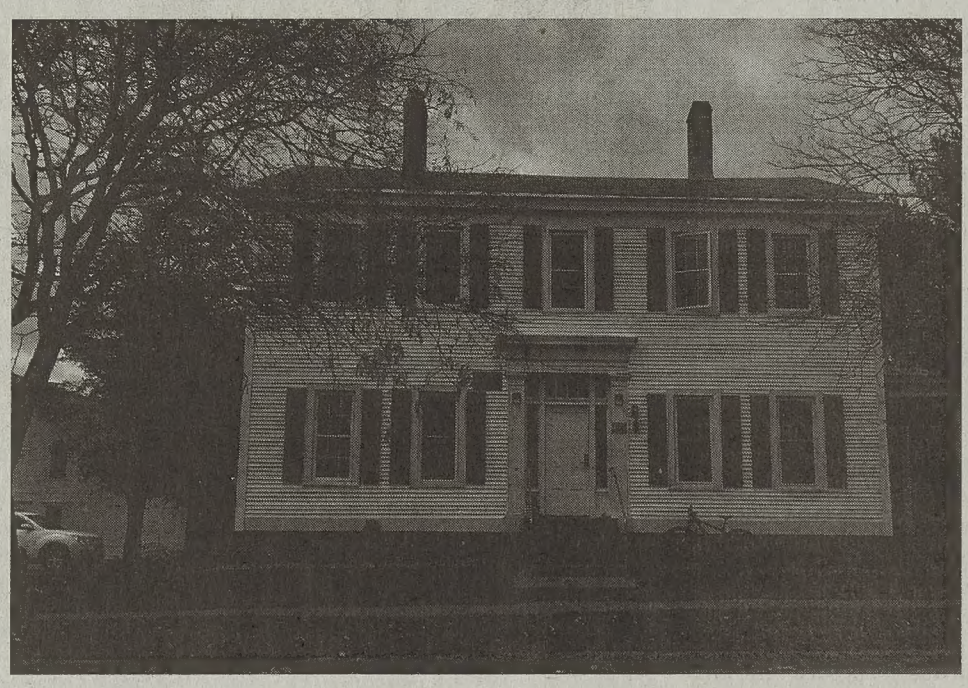
Sarah felt her team's workload was manageable even with the small residential spaces.

Jane appreciates the help, but believes the contractors should be assigned to academic buildings rather than residence halls.

"Custodians love to make connections with their students," Michael said.

"When students come back to visit, you always get a hug when they see you," Sarah said. She said that some of the female custodians on campus call themselves "surrogate moms" and "grandmas" to their students.

Having a permanent custodial staff that has relationships with commons staff members also helps create a network of people paying close attention to warning signs among students, like an abundance of alcohol in the trash or students regularly sleeping in common rooms, according to Sarah. She wondered if these aspects of the job would be lost with independent contractors, simply because they are less familiar with students and other staff members.



MAX PADILLA/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Homestead House is one of the small campús houses currently being cleaned by independent contractors as a result of custodial staff shortages.

Unlivable wages

The college currently has 16 vacancies and 85.74 staff members, a number the office uses to indicate the presence of part-time employees. This includes those working in Custodial Services, General Services, Bread Loaf Custodial Services and Waste Management. Beckwith includes all four sectors in her staff count "since we all help cover the work of the department." Supervisors are not included in this number.

Only half of the vacancies are being filled by contractors right now. Four contractors from Michelle Nolan's Cleaning Service are responsible for the small houses, and four additional contractors from Full Effects assist custodial teams wherever there is the greatest need. The college has been hiring Full Effects contractors whenever the need arises for the past year.

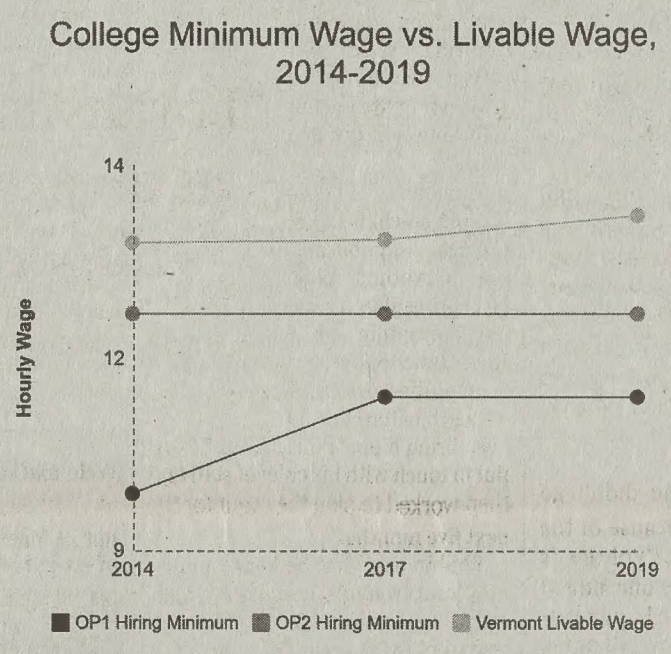
Many believe that the staff shortages stem from the low pay custodians receive for their work. The hiring minimum for a custodian position at the college is $12.07 per hour, which falls under even the lowest estimates for a living wage in Addison County and Vermont.

"I think it's the wage causing staff shortages," Michael said. "People making decisions [about our pay] don't seem to know what it takes, financially, to live here."

A 2017 study conducted by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) found the Addison County living wage for one adult with no children to be $12.40 per hour. For a single parent of one child, it is $25.07.

A 2018 study by the Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office set the Vermont living wage at $13.34 per hour. This amount is an average of the urban and rural rates for two adults with no children.

However, the National Low Income Housing Coalition set the Addison County housing wage at $19.63 per hour — more than seven dollars over Middlebury's hiring minimum.



NORA PEACHIN/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Previous Campus reporting shows ongoing staff discontent with low wages.

"Middlebury is expensive. People paid OP1 or OP2 salaries can't afford to live nearby," Michael said, in reference to the college staff pay ranges.

Custodians are categorized in the OP2 range, and custodial liaisons in the OP3 range. Approximately 15% of staff are paid at the OP1and OP2 levels, the lowest of the bands.

"Custodial work is hard work," Sarah said, "You can start at McDonald's for $15 an hour, so if our starting pay is lower, you can say 'I can find easier work and better pay elsewhere.'"

The college is aware of discontent with wages and is looking into the problem, as reported in this week's coverage of staff unionization efforts (see "Citing low wages," page 1).

Reaping the benefits

One thing that sets the college apart from other local employers is the benefits package, it offers, which both Michael and Sarah said attracted them to apply for positions at the college.

"I was attracted to this job because of the benefits. There are not a lot of places around here where you'll see the benefits that we have. They are phenomenal," Michael said.

But both agreed good benefits do not make up for inadequate pay.

"Even though we have good benefits, people can't pay their mortgages, rent or insurance if they can't make enough money," Sara said. "The cost of living keeps going up. The wages aren't keeping up with the increasing cost of living."

Sara has never gotten a raise greater than one dollar an hour at a time; her raises have varied between 25 and 50 cents an hour. When she began working at Middlebury, she took a paycut from her previous job and hasn't made it up in the 18 years she has worked here.

"If you have good, loyal, trustworthy help, you treat them the way they should be treated. You pay them the way they should be paid. Those qualities are worth something," she said. "The college needs to make us feel like what we're giving them, we're getting back in return."

Long hours, hard work

A Middlebury custodian's typical work day begins at 6 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m., with an unpaid half-hour break in the middle of the day. Custodians who are working overtime can come in as early as 3:30 a.m. to start cleaning, and work up to 12-hour days.

With staff shortages, some custodial teams that should have four members are down to only two or three. Fully-staffed teams have stepped in to help make up the work.

Custodial work is physically demanding, and "it's not always pretty," Jane said. The custodial staff's workload is especially heavy right after graduation, when custodians have to clean all the rooms for reunion and then again for summer school. Staff members work nine hour days for several weeks, doing very physical work. Student damages to college buildings also create an additional burden for the custodial staff.

"Custodial work in higher education is different than other janitorial, housekeeping or custodial jobs," Beckwith said. "There is so much that goes above and beyond normal custodial work that makes it, in my opinion, much more challenging than average custodial position." She cited keeping track of furniture and constantly-changing schedules, as well as building relationships with students, as examples.

Middlebury is not alone in this problem. Bowdoin housekeeping staff described the tolls of difficult workloads, and unlivable wages, in an article published by The Bowdoin Orient last year.

Facing a statewide dilemma

With the Vermont unemployment rate at 2.2% as of Sept. 2019, employers throughout the state are struggling to find workers. The college is no exception.

"We're competing with other entry-level jobs for the same people," Beckwith said."We just hired two new staff and have another that's in the post-offer, pre-employment screening process."

Despite new hires, Beckwith says the college may need to bring in more contractors if more vacancies pop up, although she said they "generally do get more applicants in the winter time."

The college will continue to try and fill the positions currently filled by the independent contractors with permanent staff, according to Beckwith. She also disputed that the shortage is related to the recent workforce planning initiative.

"What we are experiencing in our department has nothing to do with workforce planning," Beckwith said. Although Custodial Services reduced the number of positions in the department because of workforce planning, Beckwith said this was "not the cause of our current situation."

"Our situation is due to the number of vacant positions and inability to get applicants," she said.

However, the combination of workforce planning and the new independent contractors has fostered concern amongst staff members over job security, according to Sarah.

Although her supervisor assured her that "independent contractors are not coming in to replace permanent staff," she and others are worried. "People want job security," she said.

Jane also expressed concern that permanent staff members would be phased out. "It feels like everyone is just waiting for the rest of the bomb to drop," Sarah said.

The college is working to alleviate stress for its custodial staff, with several solutions in the works in addition to the new independent contractors.

Last summer, when staff was particularly short, management eliminated some services at the language schools, such as linen exchange and weekly in-room sweeping for faculty and directors, in order to lessen the custodians' workload.

Facilities Services has also created a student custodial helper position with flexible hours, to engage students in helping with basic tasks like removing trash and vacuuming their hallways. Two students have signed up so far, and Beckwith hopes to get more involved. She also urged all faculty, staff and students to take care of campus spaces — for example, rearranging any out-of-place furniture at the end of class and taking dishes back to dining halls.

All three custodians expressed the importance of respect and appreciation for the custodial staff.

"It would be nice to feel that upper management really did appreciate everything that everyone is doing, especially when people are down-staffed and the team is pulling together and not asking for help," Sarah said.

"Providing for your family and self preservation should not be a privilege, but that's what's expected as Middlebury College employees," Jane said.

What is most important, according to Jane, is for administrators to ask what staff members need, and to really listen.

Sophomores will no longer be bound to commons in next room draw

Continued from Page 1

response to the external committee's report, which said that relocating first year students to live in closer proximity to one another "should increase students' sense of belonging at Middlebury, and reduce some of the tensions related to diversity and inclusion that we heard about during our visit to campus."

These changes effectively put an end to the commons system, which was first established after the removal of Greek life from campus in 1989 and modeled off of the house system at universities like Harvard and Yale. The commons were put into place in 1991 and have faced major adjustments twice since then.

The upcoming changes to residential life attempt to combat the "inefficiency" produced by the commons model, while also working to better serve and support students, administrators told The Campus.

"I was shocked at how complicated the system was... and the faculty were not being used as effectively as they could be," said Rob Moeller, a psychology professor who specializes in the mental health of college students.

Moeller has been an integral member of the How Will We Live Together Steering Committee. The committee formed in the spring of 2018 to develop and write the final recommendations.

"[We realized] that the experiment of randomizing students into communities didn't work," Moeller said. "You can tell someone that their new mascot is a squirrel or frog or a rhino, but it didn't resonate with students. Students weren't walking around saying, 'Go squirrels.'"

The plan also suggests planning will soon be underway for the renovation or replacement of Battell Hall, the biggest first year dorm on campus, as well as for a new student center. Administrators said that the college cannot operate without the beds provided by Battell Hall, meaning that the building will likely continue to operate while a new facility is built.

A re-centralized residential life office

The shift away from the commons system will fundamentally change how the college approaches student residential life staff. It will also add two new positions to the residential life team, including an associate dean for residential life and an assistant director of student success. These positions will be filled by AJ Place,who served as theDean of Brainerd commons until spring 2019, and Michelle Audette, who now works as Middlebury's ADA Coordinator, respectively.

The positions will both fall within a consolidated Office of Residential Life. This office, in addition to directing students towards resources, will work to remove some of the workload from deans, the number of which will be downsized from five to four.

The college will use new software to help deans manage student needs, and deans will be relieved of some of their residential life responsibilities. This shift is intended to help ease deans' workloads as they become responsible for larger numbers of students.

The creation of these positions is already underway, according to AJ Place.

"I'll be supervising the folks that we know now as the CRDs, which is what I'm already doing this year," Place said.

Place will also be supervising Assistant Director for New Student Experience and Residential Education Kristy Carpenter and Assistant Director for Housing Operations Kady Shea.

These positions are one such way the college hopes to reach students "proactively" and move away from what Place termed a "purely reactive" approach. Place hopes this re-centralization will provide students with heightened access to resources, including programming that will help educate students on a range of topics.

"In Brainerd last year, we piloted

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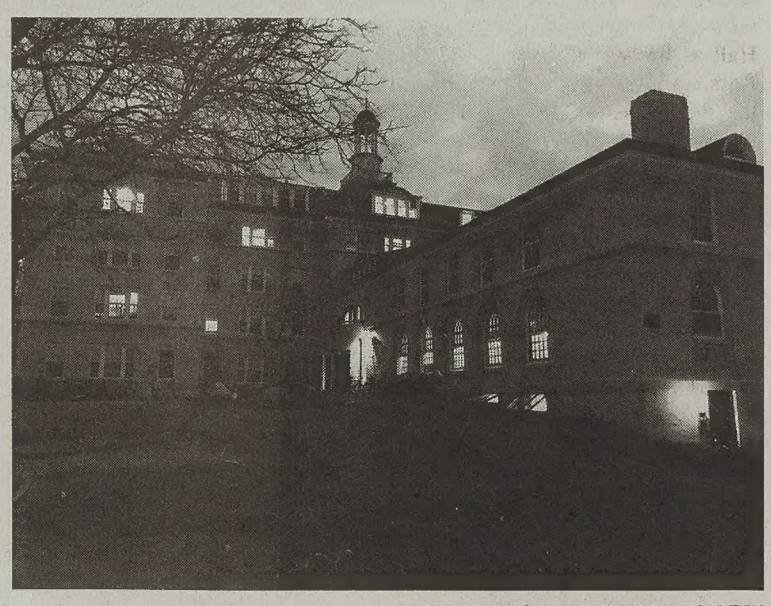


MAX PADILLA/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Under the revised commons system, starting next fall, Hepburn Hall will serve as housing for first-years rather than sphomores.

Times columnist Ross Douthat champions American exceptionalism

By RACHEL LU
Contributing Writer

President Donald Trump's election in 2016 disrupted the country's understanding of politics, conservatism and national identity. As a conservative op-ed columnist at The New York Times, Ross Douthat grapples with this disruption every day.

On Thursday, Oct. 17, Douthat joined moderator and former Vermont Governor Jim Douglas on campus in a discussion titled "Conservatism After Trump: Reaganism Restored or Populism Forever?" as part of the Alexander Hamilton Forum.

Douthat began his talk by describing the modern conservative movement, which he said is rooted in an understanding of American exceptionalism. Douthat defined American exceptionalism as a set of qualities and ideologies that sets this country apart from other nations. He included on this list competing religiosity, commercial culture, suspicion for a centralized government, communitarianism and a mission of liberty. In Douthat's opinion, these are the elements that modern conservatism should seek to preserve.

"Those exceptional qualities have sustained our society and enabled our republic to flourish, and therefore, while allowing reforming change, they're qualities worth defending and trying to preserve in changing times," Douthat said at the talk.

In the last 20 years, however, Douthat said that American life has continued to defeat conservative belief by becoming less "exceptional." In his mind, this stems from an increasing secularization of American life, a diminishing dependence on communalism, a recession from peak capitalism and a skepticism toward foreign missionaries. More importantly, according to Douthat, a decline in anti-government sentiments has led to a rise of socialism and populism.

According to Douthat, it was Trump's understanding of this shift away from American exceptionalism that has allowed him to move the Republican Party away from both its politicians and intellectuals. Trump saw that everyday Republicans no longer cared about defending these exceptionalism, but simply finding a voice in a liberal trending community.

"If you look at the other Republican politicians running for president, there is always a sense that what worked for Ronald Reagan in 1980 will work again in 21st century America," Douthat said. "Trump is none of that. There is the spectacle of him on the debate stage saying things that are not conservative. He didn't care. Enough Republican voters didn't care about these orthodoxies either."

Douthat offered a distinction between conservatism and reactionism, two fields of thought on the right that he believes are often conflated. He defined conservative policy as one that is confident in its ability to endure despite dramatic changes, and a reactionary policy as one in defensive after defeat has already occurred. Douthat believes that globally, the conservative right has abandoned a conservative era for a reactionary one.

According to Douthat, Trump brought a different perspective to the party that spoke to the reactionary era.

However, Douthat believes that Trump's style of populism has been politically unsuccessful in furthering traditionally populist goals. In other words, Trump's spontaneous approach to politics does not allow him to fulfill his lofty promises, resulting in the Republican administration's repeat of a typical conservative agenda.

"He has failed to build the larger support you need for populism, failed to transform the upper echelon of the Republican party that brings it in line with what a populist agenda would be," Douthat said. "He's likely to lose re-election, because there is no sustained agenda building of any sort."

Looking into the future, Douthat hypothesized that some Republicans are expecting to return to a traditional Reagan-era conservative agenda post-Trump. However, in Douthat's opinion, American conservatism can no longer re-live Reaganism, because the American exceptionalism that existed when Douthat came of age as a conservative no longer exist today.

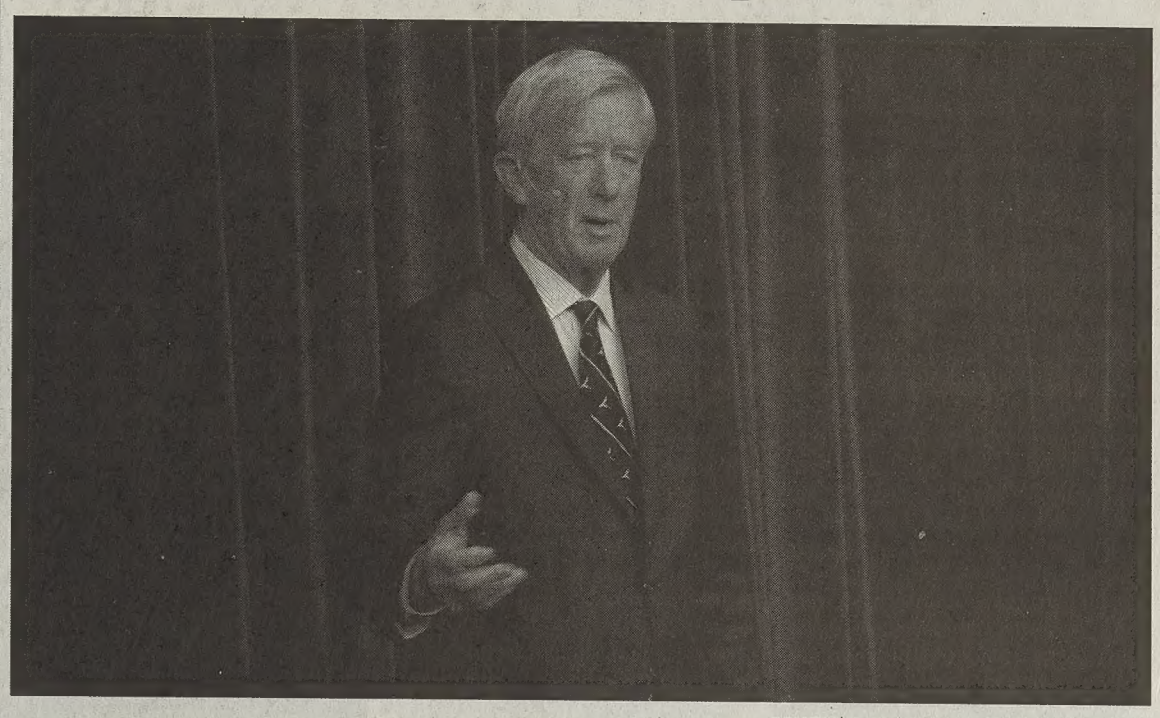
Donovan Compton '23, who attended the talk, thought it was interesting to hear from a conservative who does not support Trump. While Compton said his political beliefs do not align with Douthat's, he felt he was able to learn about the future of conservatism from a different perspective.

"I have friends who didn't go to the event simply because of the topic," Compton said. "Politics is not about only hearing one side of the story, but finding a happy medium to have a policy we all agree on. It is important for everyone to be educated on both sides."

Political Science Professor Keegan Callanan organized the event. Callanan said he was impressed by Douthat's extensive reading of Alexis de Tocqueville in shaping his view of the current political atmosphere.

"Mr. Douthat writes a twice-weekly column for the New York Times. He often uses these columns to explain the conservative movement to readers and, of course, to criticize elements of the movement," Callanan said. "He possesses a historical sense that is fairly uncommon in newspaper columnists."

Republican Trump challenger talks polarity in politics



BENJY RENTON/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Former Massachusets governor and 2020 presidential candidate Bill Weld spoke at Middlebury on Oct. 16.

By PORTER BOWMAN
SGA Correspondent

Middlebury saw its first visit from a 2020 presidential candidate on Oct. 16. William Weld, a former governor of Massachusetts running against President Donald Trump in the Republican primary, spoke to a crowd of around 40 students in Dana Auditorium in a talk hosted by the Middlebury College Republicans.

Weld previously ran as former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson's running mate in the 2016 presidential election on the Libertarian Party ticket, which garnered nearly 4.5 million votes nationwide. Weld also served two terms as governor of Massachusetts between 1991 and 1997.

Brendan Philbin '21, the co-chair of the College Republicans, met Governor Weld last spring after a campaign event in White River Junction, Vt.

"He offered to give a speech before I could even bring it up," Philbin said. "I was put in touch with his chief of staff and then worked to plan the event for the next five months."

Philbin said that he kept running into legal troubles, because any official campaign event hosted at the college would violate the college's 501c3 nonprofit status. As such, Weld appeared in his capacity as a former governor and longtime political figure rather than as a presidential candidate.

Weld spoke about his political background and policy views, and spent most of the event engaging in a question and answer session with students. Weld also held a pizza social event in the Robert A. Jones '59 Conference Room after his talk, where discussion continued.

"We know that the Middlebury community is very civically engaged and interested in politics, so we thought that this event with Governor Weld would give students, faculty and staff an opportunity to engage directly with a prominent politician at both the state and federal level," Philbin said. "This is why I think the pizza social that followed the event was so valuable. It gave us a chance to speak candidly about politics with someone who's been involved in it for decades."

Weld spoke openly about his dismay with the Republican Party under President Donald Trump and his hopes for the future of the party, both in terms of policy and politics. Speaking about impeachment and loyalty to the President, Weld was particularly critical of many Republican members of Congress.

"Loyalty is too often used as an excuse for doing the wrong thing," Weld told students.

> "Loyalty is too often used as an excuse for doing the wrong thing."
>
> *Former Massachusets Governor Bill Weld*

Weld pointed to his time as governor of Massachusetts as an example of executive leadership. He described his budgeting strategies that helped the state out of a recession, his support of reforming but not repealing the Affordable Care Act and efforts to find ways to lower drug prices. He also stressed the importance of having a diverse political makeup of past and future administrations.

According to students in attendance, the extended Q&A portion of the event was particularly compelling.

"I definitely enjoyed hearing from an unconventional Republican candidate, and particularly found his bottom-up budgeting approach interesting," Samuel Sullivan '22.5 said.

Philbin said that students asked tough questions during the event, prompting good discussion.

"As I had warned Governor Weld would happen, the students did not go up to ask him softball questions," Philbin said. "I was impressed, though not surprised, at how specific and interesting the questions that students asked were. They gave a great opportunity to really go in-depth into a presidential candidate's political platform."

Justin Cooper '22 appreciated the opportunity to engage with the views of a moderate conservative.

"I thought Governor Weld gave very interesting insight into what a more moderate Republican's political views might be, and it was very refreshing to hear a more level-headed conservative give alternative, in-depth policy ideas to Trump's," Cooper said. "That being said, during the Q&A, he did jump around quite a few of the questions, managing to fully evade giving a clear answer."

Alex Demoly '22 also thought some of Weld's answers were evasive, but found him to be open and worth engaging with at the same time.

"My lasting impression of Governor Weld is that he is a very approachable man," Demoly said. "Not one completely devoid of the talking points and rhetorical firmness necessary for a politician, but certainly one with whom you can have a comfortable chat, a slice of pizza in one hand and a Coke in the other."

Philbin found the event to be a successful show of discourse and dialogue amongst members of the Middlebury community from all political stripes.

"I think it was important to show the Middlebury community, the overwhelming majority of which are of the political left, that Republicans are not all climate-denying corporatists unconcerned with issues like wealth inequality and minority rights," Philbin said. "It can often feel like there is no common ground between members of our two dominant political parties but, once you're able to have an in-depth conversation with them, it becomes clear that we often agree on more than we disagree."

College Board of Overseers holds first meeting of year

Continued from Page 1

board had four days of meetings, stretching from Wednesday to Saturday. Their two other yearly meetings, in the winter and spring, are each a day shorter.

A focus of the most recent meeting was BLUEprint, the residential life model developed in response to the How Will We Live Together report. This includes shifts in the structure of the commons system, like removing five separate commons in favor of two first-year "clusters," establishing Hepburn Hall as first-year housing and the Ross complex as sophomore housing, as well as preliminary talks on a new student center (see "ResLife rewrite," page 1).

Trustees did not vote on the changes to the commons system because, budgetarily, it is an evolution of the current system; however, they did hear presentations from Residential Life staff and ask questions about the changes.

In this case, Patton and Lee said, it was the Trustees' job to "ask us challenging questions and hear updates on our progress."

"The trustees were very positive and endorsed our directions," Patton and Lee said of the conversations about BLUEprint, which was subsequently announced to students in an all-campus email. "They gave us an overall endorsement of our directions and we are excited about moving forward."

Student Government Association (SGA) President Varsha Vijayakumar serves as the student constituent overseer to the board. This past weekend was her first time serving formally in this role, although she attended last spring's meeting because of her position on the SGA.

"It's refreshing to attend these meetings because you realize very quickly that they really do care — they care about how to make Middlebury feel more like a home for all students," Vijayakumar said. "They care about the biggest issues facing our campus community, and most importantly, they care about developing tangible solutions to these problems."

Vijayakumar cannot vote in meetings, but she expresses student voices and opinions through her position.

The board also discussed adding a second student constituent at last weekend's meetings, according to Vijayakumar. The SGA first introduced a bill to do just that in April 2018, although the suggestion was ultimately not upheld. Vijayakumar noted that her presence at the meeting allowed a student perspective in an otherwise hypothetical conversation.

"Being there allowed me to ground some of the arguments in favor of the initiative in ways that wouldn't necessarily have been possible had I not been present," she said.

In addition to the student constituent, a faculty constituent and staff constituent also attended the meetings and made recommendations to the CBO. These roles are filled by History Professor Bill Hart and Associate Vice President for Advancement Operations Jami Black, respectively.

"My role is to listen carefully and to offer faculty perspectives, plural, on any given issue, such as curricular matters, or student internships, or faculty mentoring, or student financial aid, or on inclusivity and diversity, two key touch stones at the core of the College's mission," Hart said. "I and most of the faculty find these issues critically important for the full educational experience of Middlebury College students."

Other topics discussed at the meeting included the faculty-student relationship and a fundraising initiative called the "Comprehensive Campaign," which involves raising money for the college through campaigns focused on "themes that are part of Middlebury's future," according to Patton and Lee.

"We are particularly excited about themes of data literacy, increasing our global network, and creating a more cohesive student experience," they said.

Within the CBO are several committees, like the Resources Committee, which deals with the college budget. Resources does a deep dive into the college's finances at every meeting, according to Patton and Lee. After the workforce planning efforts of last year, the college has managed to reduce its deficit without formally laying off any employees, although the process has left many feeling "voiceless and overworked," according to The Campus' coverage of unionization efforts (see "Citing low wages," page 1).

Last January, the board unanimously voted to divest from fossil fuels, and to create the broader Energy 2028 initiative, in response to years of student activism (see "Middlebury voted to divest," page 1).

SHIRLEY MAO/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

President Laurie Patton announced the college's Energy 2028 plan in Wilson hall last year. The plan was seen largely as a response to student activism, and was unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees last January.

After considering full evacuation, study abroad office offers options to students in Chile amid civil unrest

By JAMES FINN
Managing Editor

After first considering a full evacuation of students in Chile amidst civil unrest there, Middlebury's study abroad office is allowing students to choose how to proceed.

In an email to students enrolled in Middlebury programs in Chile on Oct. 24, Assistant Director of International Programs Alessandra Capossela outlined four options students may take going forward. They can either choose to remain in their host cities and await universities resuming class; relocate to Buenos Aires, Argentina for the remainder of the semester; or can return home to the U.S.

If they return to the U.S., they have the option to complete coursework remotely for up to 2.5 credits, or can earn up to 4.5 credits by adding a course of summer study with the Middlebury School of Spanish.

"We spoke with [international security advisors] Global Rescue this morning and our advisors there confirmed that the situation was stable for the time being, with some slight improvements in that curfew hours are being shortened in a number of cities," Capossela wrote in the email. "[Schools in Chile Director] Juan [Pastene] is cautiously optimistic that many of the universities will reopen on Monday."

In her email, Capossela, who advises for Middlebury programs across Latin America, asked that students make a decision by this Friday, Nov. 1.

Currently, 23 students from Middlebury and other colleges are enrolled in the C.V. Starr Schools Abroad, which are located in Concepción, La Serena, Santiago, Temuco, Valdivia and the sister cities Valparaíso and Viña del Mar. Most students in Middlebury programs are located in the capital city of Santiago and the sister cities, where protests erupted at the end of last week after a hike in public transportation fares.

The hike was later revoked by President Sebastián Piñera, but protesters declared on social media that the increased fees were only the "tip of the iceberg," and have demanded change in wealth inequality, government corruption and high cost-of living — conditions many see as remnants of Augusto Pinochet's 1970s dictatorship.

The Chilean government declared a state of emergency in some cities, including Valparaíso and Santiago, on Saturday, Ot. 19. It has since been lifted.

Following the announcement, members of the police and military attacked and detained protestors, shooting at them with rubber and live bullets and throwing tear gas bombs.

On Oct. 22, Capossela alerted students enrolled in the programs via email that the college's study abroad office was developing plans for a possible evacuation "should things not improve in the next few days."

In the wake of that announcement, some students expressed frustration at the possibility of leaving the country.

"I can't speak for everyone, but we feel relatively safe and want to continue learning from this experience, even if it's not a traditional semester abroad," said Sidra Pearson '21, who is enrolled at the Catholic University of Valparaíso and living in Viña del Mar.

Students in the sister cities responded to the Oct. 22 announcement by creating a petition asking to remain in Chile. Eleven of the 12 students in those cities have signed the petition. Mason Arndt '21, who is living in a homestay in Viña del Mar, was the only student who chose not to sign, saying that though he has had a positive experience in Chile, he doesn't believe strongly enough to sign that staying is the right move.

"If they decide to send us home I would definitely be sad because I'd feel like I'd be losing a valuable experience, but for me it wouldn't be the worst thing in the world," he said at the time.

In Chile, students in Middlebury programs have observed — either firsthand or through accounts by Chilean acquaintances — looting of stores by protesters, violent government response to protests and other signs of unrest over the past several days. Looting, arson and other violent tactics used by some protesters have created some conflict within the movement between those who do and do not condone the use of violent protest tactics.

COURTESY OF MASON ARNDT

Protesters carrying a banner bearing the slogan "Piñera smells like dictatorship" in Valparaíso, Chile on Oct. 23.

Protests in Valparaíso and Santiago have significantly altered the course of students' semesters. Some Middlebury students in Valparaíso had already missed substantial class time due to student strikes at universities that forced classes to start in September rather than mid-July. Classes at the Middlebury programs' host universities were again cancelled this week when this round of protests began. Students have been told to remain indoors at all times in the face of various curfews put in place in major cities.

A 6 p.m. curfew was put into effect in Viña del Mar on Monday. Before then, beginning on Saturday, it was set to 8 p.m. Arndt said. With major cities under martial law, the Chilean military has repeatedly shot people for staying out past curfew.

Arndt saw protesters lighting trash cans on fire in the street outside his apartment window on Saturday night. One man threw a brick through the window of a pharmacy across the street, and protesters proceeded to steal items from the store. Later, Arndt watched police arrive and dispel the protesters, who were out past curfew, with batons and tear gas.

"It feels a bit apocalyptic," Arndt said.

Over the weekend, Pearson said she tried to visit a friend's homestay in the late afternoon, only to be turned around by a line of police officers advancing down a street and throwing tear gas at a throng of protesters.

"When I left my house, you could taste the smoke in the air," Pearson said. "People were setting fires everywhere."

Arndt understands the protestors' cause, but he and other students have largely assumed roles as observers.

"It's easy to be empathetic in terms of the high inequality and the high cost of living," Arndt said. "But it's really impossible for us to understand what it's like to live in a country like this that had a dictator."

The program's students have been told not to join protests in light of the violence, as well as the possible deportation if they are caught. But the consequences of the protests for them will not be nearly as significant as they are for Chileans, said Pearson.

"The way this is going to affect us is probably not going to reach far beyond our academics for one semester," she said. "It's a pretty in-your-face reminder of our privilege and status as foreigners here. Chileans can't just up and leave, this is their reality."

Last year, students studying at the C.V. Starr school in Yaoundé, Cameroon were evacuated as a precaution following contentious presidential elections. That evacuation, to Morocco, was temporary.

Editor's Note: This is a developing story and will be updated continually online.

Charting the 15-year march toward divestment

Continued from Page 1

paign as earlier activists have graduated. The final push was led by a group of sophomores in 2017 who devoted themselves to drafting presentations and organizing rallies under the umbrella of the Sunday Night Environmental Group (SNEG). The fact that these students weren't graduating anytime soon certainly helped in abating the trouble of generational turnover, students and college officials say.

According to one of the leaders on the forefront of Divest Middlebury, Zoe Grodsky '20.5, the intense time commitment the campaign required leading up to the board's vote prompted students to dial back their activism or put their focus elsewhere after the fact.

"We're all pretty burnt out after what happened in January," she said. "We haven't necessarily been working on accountability."

Indeed, there does not appear to be any structure in place for the administration to communicate divestment milestones to the Middlebury community. And now that the confetti has settled on the Board's landmark vote, the college has done little to tout its progress. (The Aug. 1 benchmark came and went with little fanfare.) But in interviews, Middlebury's financial officers and student leaders have painted a picture of a college working to make good on its promises, despite a lack of transparency at the outset.

Contributing to a lack of communication seems to be the campaign's generous timeframe: the Energy 2028 goal posts — stretched across 15 years, despite its name — will mean that the college won't regularly, or even annually, meet major milestones that warrant announcements.

Still, in President Laurie Patton's original address to the college last January, she said that the college hoped to beat the 15-year mark. "We understand that time is of the essence and that this is a floor and not a ceiling," she said. "We will make every effort to get there quicker."

From divest darties to suits and PowerPoints

As the campaign headed to the Board of Trustees earlier this year, the college decided to bundle its divestment plan with three other environmental goals: energy conservation, renewable energy and environmental education. Folding those initiatives into the divestment pledge was largely strategic, as college officials sought to make the plan more palatable to the trustees.

"The way that Energy 2028 is packaged makes it really hard for board members to say no," said Cora Kircher '20, a leading member of Divest Middlebury. "If you say 'no' to this one pillar, then you're saying 'no' to all these other dimensions."

At the same time, students changed their own tactics. After years of futile protests (and even a divestment-themed day party — dubbed "darty" — in 2013), a new generation of students took a more business-like approach to their campaign. In addition to arming themselves with statistics, they donned suits and high heels for a formal presentation to the Board of Trustees. It worked.

Instead of making an emotional appeal about climate change and the fate of the planet, student activists tailored their argument, embracing the broader environmental plan put forward by the college and identifying key allies within the administration.

"We tried to go with the moral argument for so long," Grodsky said. "And it should work. As an institution that cares about the human population, Middlebury should divest from fossil fuels. But that's not enough and it just won't be for any school."

David Provost, the college's treasurer, also emerged as an invaluable resource. "I think without David this wouldn't have happened," Grodsky said. "Identifying him as an ally was a huge game-changer."

Elisa Gan '20, the student liaison to the SGA on endowment affairs and the only student member of the board's Investment Committee, estimated that Provost devoted some 300 hours to the divestment issue since joining the college in 2017, via strategy sessions and negotiations. Provost coached students through divestment presentations and walked them through financial jargon, teaching them the language they needed to speak on the Investment Committee's terms.

Despite the uphill battle waged by students (the trustees had voted against divestment in 2013), the college has a long history of environmental stewardship.

"In the seventies, this college made a point to be the first college in America to have an Environmental Studies program and the first to say we were going to achieve carbon neutrality," Provost said. "We have been at the leading edge of addressing climate change. If it were anyone's position to lead in this space, it is Middlebury College."

Energy 2028 (or 2034?)

While some students were taken aback that divestment under "Energy 2028" would be implemented in 15 years, not 10, others praised aspects of Middlebury's ultimate divestment plan. "What I was excited about was how they defined fossil fuels," Kircher said. "They included pipelines and infrastructure. They have the largest definition of what fossil fuels are from any divestment movement.

But with a longer roll-out? "The 15-year thing is not great," she conceded.

College officials say, in their defense, that divestment is not a quick process, given the Wall Street mantra to buy low and sell high. "The board was most concerned that if we had done what the students had asked of 'Sell all your fossil fuel assets today,' and fossil fuel investments were depressed at that time, we would be walking away from money," Provost said. "And that would fly in the face of the board's fiduciary responsibility."

The 15-year plan was settled on during negotiations with the college's investment manager, Investure. The Virginia-based equity firm oversees the majority of the college's endowment through a "hands-off" structure in which managers have free reign over what they decide to invest in. But in response to Middlebury's demands, Investure agreed to facilitate complete fossil fuel divestment through the creation of "fossil-free portfolios."

In order to transition the college's current endowment portfolio from fossil fuels in compliance with Investure's model, the college needed time.

"Fifteen years is simply the amount of time that every transaction we're currently invested in goes on its natural progression of maturing and then new money coming back in," Provost said. "The last one of those, the furthest one out, was 15 years. The maturity is going to be done in the seven to eight-year time frame. We estimate that the 5.3% will be significantly below 1% by 2028. Fifteen years is just the tail."

Where is the money?

Continued resistance to divestment came from Investure's former CEO, Alice Handy. Her departure in 2018 led to new conversations on how the firm could accommodate Middlebury's environmental stewardship.

But Middlebury is not alone among colleges in outsourcing its financial investment decisions. Although Middlebury is Investure's largest client, Smith College works with the same firm and recently followed Middlebury's lead in announcing its commitment to divest from fossil fuels Oct. 18.

But proprietary concerns make the endowment's investment portfolio difficult to publicly disclose. As of Dec. 31, the college had a total of $1.04 billion invested through Investure. Of that total, $53.5 million was "exposed" to the fossil fuel industry (meaning, directly or indirectly in the fossil fuel industry) while only a fraction of that is directly invested in coal, with $950,000 or 0.1% of the entire endowment. Yet in the last three years, the college's fossil fuel investments have grown by $10 million.

According to Provost, there is another $100 million of the endowment that is not accounted for in Investure's holdings. These are privately invested through donations with specific stipulations.

In contrast to its financial foothold in fossil fuels, the Board of Trustees has repeatedly voted to ramp up sustainable investments in the last decade. The most drastic change came in 2014 when the Investment Committee upped its commitment to sustainable investment to $50 million (from the mere $4 million endorsed four years prior). This move followed the time the board explicitly voted against divestment in 2013.

The $50 million commitment alone pushed the college's investments in sustainable assets to eclipse those in fossil fuels. Since then, the board has voted to move an additional $19.3 million into sustainable assets. According to Patton, the endowment's stake in sustainable investments will continue to grow in tandem with its decrease in fossil fuels.

"You will see a continued increase in ESGs and renewable assets as they come on the market," Provost said. "We're finding more now and I expect those will continue to grow."

The slippery slope

One of the greatest concerns of divestment skeptics was the "slippery slope question" — that divesting from fossil fuels would inevitably lead to students returning to the Board year after year demanding additional divestments from other controversial sectors.

"The board wanted to make sure that they weren't being asked by students every year to divest from another sector," Provost said.

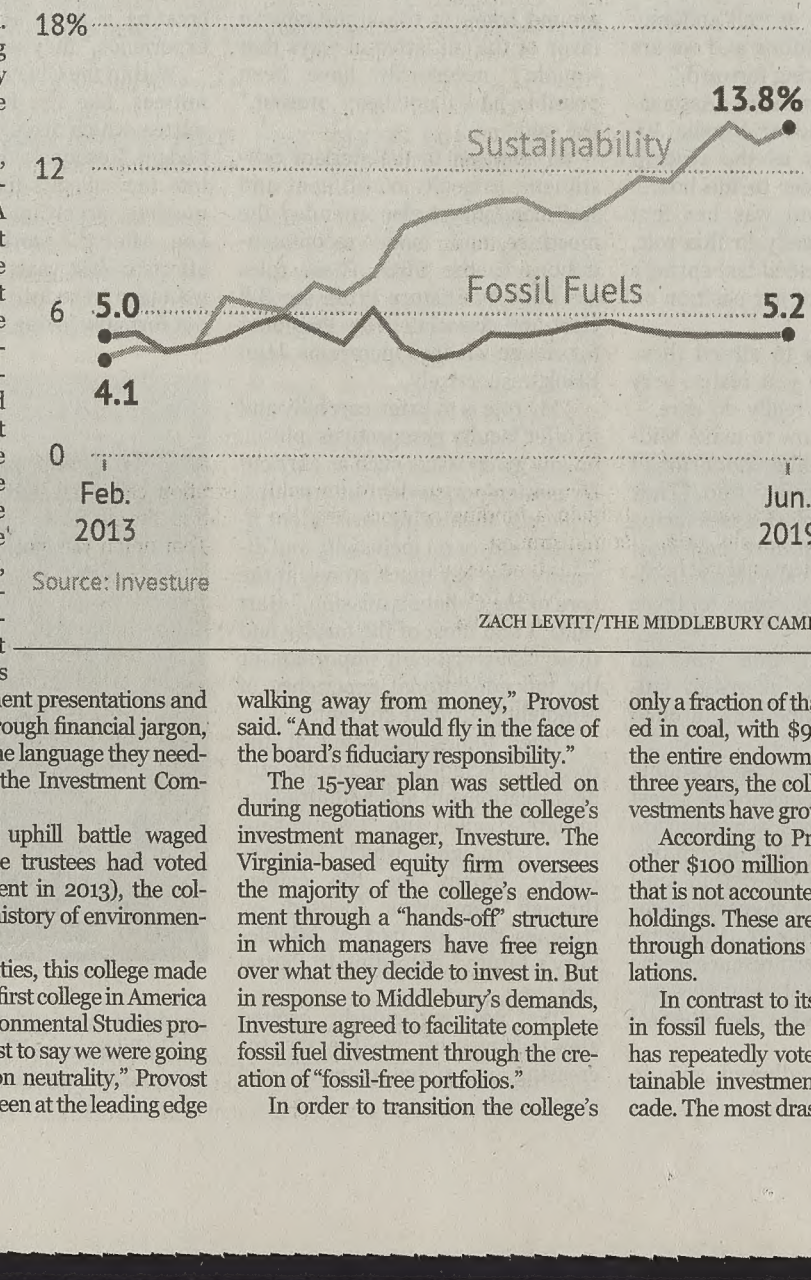
During the faculty referendum last year — when a notable 92% voted in favor of divestment — one professor expressed concern. "What's next? Arms? Prisons? Pornography?" they allegedly said, according to faculty present at the meeting.

The board's concerns may not have been simply conjectural either. Those involved in the Divest Middlebury movement, along with SGA members, are now raising concerns about privatized prison investment, amid the national campaign against mass incarceration. An SGA email sent out to some students last week solicited opinions on the college's financial stake in such prisons.

Gan, the student liaison who is uniquely allowed to attend the trustees' Investment Committee meetings, is responsible for serving as a bridge between students and board members. This year, newly-elected, Gan plans to spark conversations between the board and the student body on issues such as private prisons and weapon manufacturers.

Some students think the slippery slope shows students are moving in the right direction. According to them, as ethically dubious investments come to light, the college should be removing its financial links.

"In a dream world, I think that we should be divesting from prisons, from arms," Kircher said. "Yeah, please — bring on the slippery slope."



ZACH LEVITT/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Consequences of workforce planning leave facilities staff exhausted, waiting for change

Continued from Page 1

with what he felt was a murky process. Decisions about the "voluntary" process were often made behind closed doors, he said, and the redistribution of work showed a lack of understanding about the work being done. "There was nothing voluntary about it," he said.

Norm Cushman, vice president for operations, said communication can be a challenge in a department with so many workers. "It would have been very difficult to have solicited everyone's input," he said.

Cushman said the process of work redistribution will play out piecemeal, as employees who took buyouts gradually leave the college and their departments develop strategies for how to "do less with less."

on timing and availability of financial resources.

The college had to tackle workforce planning before the compensation review, Provost said, because addressing its financial management had to be a fiscal priority, given the severity of the deficit.

Provost said he is expecting the study's data to show that the college should pay its OP1- and OP2-level employees higher wages. The study is set to be done by the spring. At that time, the administration will begin to work its findings into the budget for the 2021 fiscal year.

"A slap in the face"

The college did not officially lay off any employees. Some felt the offers they received backed them into corners anyway.

One employee, a servery worker who has been at the college for 31 years, said her situation felt like "a slap in the face." She was previously employed in a facilities office job before her position was cut.

MAX PADILLA/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

"Benefits here are a lot better than what you would find anywhere else around here," said one facillities employee. "But I can't go down to Hannaford and buy groceries with my benefits."

Low pay forces employees who work two jobs into a "balancing act"

The Campus has previously reported low wages as a source of dissatisfaction among employees. Separately, pro-union staff who spoke to The Campus said low wages were a major reason they sought to organize.

Many employees have to hold multiple jobs to survive. That balancing act, another facilities employee said, can become incredibly burdensome when workloads at the college are also increased in light of workforce planning. When many facilities staff did not show up to work after an unexpectedly severe snowstorm last year, for example, administrators questioned staff priorities.

"We had a meeting with a manager who was extremely unhappy because a lot of people weren't here helping," the employee said. "He told us that if we had second jobs, we needed to not go in and instead had to come in and shovel."

The college has consistently framed workforce planning as a way to make staff feel more invested in the future of the institution. But according to staff, it doesn't always feel like that.

"Yeah, you could say workforce planning is for us, because now [the college is] financially sustainable," said Staff Council President Tim Parsons. "But if you're only making $12.07 an hour and your shift in the custodial wing starts at 4 a.m., workforce planning doesn't really feel like it's for you."

These low wages have led to shortages in some areas, like custodial and recycling services. To address these shortages, the college is currently spearheading a compensation review with an external consulting group. The aim of the study is to gather "market data" — information that will indicate what the college needs to pay going forward to make itself a competitive employer.

David Provost, executive vice president for finance and administration, said the college is undertaking the review now because it has been nearly a decade since the last one of its kind. He also said that the college has seen increased turnover in the last two years in positions within the lowest two pay bands, in which many facilities positions fall. Wages for OP1 positions — for example, some dining hall servery positions — begin at $11 an hour, while OP2 positions — including some groundsworking and custodial jobs — begin at $12.07 an hour.

Meanwhile, staff spoke about how comparable positions in town had wages that started three or four dollars higher, although without comparable benefits. Separately, custodians told The Campus that hiring shortages in custodial services might be due to the high costs of living in Addison County, costs which workers on an OP2-level budget are often not able to shoulder (see "Independent contractors fill gaps," page 2).

"We know over the last 18 to 24 months it has been more difficult to attract and retain OP1 and OP2 level positions," Provost said. "If the review suggests we need to increase these salaries, then we will." He added that the decision would have to be contingent

Even though she shared a similar workload with the two other employees in her previous office, she had a different job title from her co-workers and hers was the only position that was cut. In other offices, where multiple workers held the same positions, the process was more "voluntary," since one worker's choice to take a buyout or job transfer meant others could refuse.

The servery worker was, as multiple staff members put it, "workforce planned."

"At the college, seniority has never meant anything," the employee said. "I've been here 31 years — I'm a loyal worker, have always been on time, never been sick. Didn't matter at all."

The staff member was informed by supervisors that her position would be cut toward the end of that phase in the process. But she couldn't afford to take the buyout package the college was offering. The staff member instead applied for several of the then-newly-created positions posted on a private portal. Many of the available job postings required degrees, she said. "I don't have a college degree," she said. "Doesn't mean I didn't have the qualifications — I didn't have the degree."

All jobs for which she was eligible required higher levels of physical activity than she was used to. After working at a desk for so many years, the transition to a job that requires her to carry heavy loads and stand for hours at a time has taken a toll. Last week, she suffered a workplace injury.

Contacted by AFSCME while she was still in a facilities position, the staff member attended initial meetings and supported the effort to unionize. She said she would support unionization among facilities staff, even in her new role, "Because you'd have someone else looking out for you besides the people who are higher up here," she said. "They expect the lowest paid people here to work the hardest."

Despite low wages, staff like the servery worker identified the benefits the college offers to its faculty and staff as exceptional in comparison with other positions in the area. Among them are good healthcare, extensive retirement plans and paid time off, as well as discounts at some stores, free gym passes and roadside assistance.

"If it was not for the benefits, 90% of these facilities people would not be here," the first facilities employee said.

"Benefits here are a lot better than what you would find anywhere else around here," said the other. "But I can't go down to Hannaford and buy groceries with my benefits."

"Middlebury Needs a UNION!"

Van Deusen, the union rep and the president of the Vermont American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), said he was contacted by facilities employees over the summer about starting a union.

While some staff concerns, like low pay and abrupt, last-minute shift scheduling, have been prevalent for a long time, Van Deusen believes this round of workforce planning catalyzed the staff's outreach.

After their first meetings in Ilsley Public Library in July, Van Deusen said he was in contact with "dozens of facilities staff." At subsequent off-campus gatherings, he spoke with interested parties about what the union could offer them. Many were intrigued.

One of the facilities workers told The Campus he "absolutely" supports the formation of a union, "Mainly for pay. And also, to have a voice." He cited the workforce planning process as a period during which he felt particularly left in the dark by his superiors.

"I think the biggest thing a union would have done is that through workforce planning, there were so many unanswered questions," he added. "The administration would not have been able to do all that without talking to [the union] first."

The servery worker said she would be in favor of a facilities union, "because of the seniority part of it. And to negotiate a better raise," she said.

Some workers were also inspired by the successful union effort at St. Michael's College. In 2012, custodians there unionized with AFSCME. They later negotiated $15-per-hour pay in their second contract.

Despite this recent win for Vermont labor advocates, Sociology Professor Jamie McCallum, who speializes in labor studies, said union decline in the U.S. has been happening since the 1950s and picked up speed in the late 1970s.

Once word of mouth began to spread about the Middlebury union effort, Van Deusen handed out authorization cards for interested employees to sign. What followed was a flood of information and rumors circulating between staff and the administration. On Aug. 19, one month after union authorization cards were first distributed, Miller, the vice president of human resources, replied to the initial drive in a letter that administrators hand-delivered to all facilities employees.

"Middlebury supports your right to choose whether to unionize," the letter said.

"We know that many of you have raised legitimate and important concerns about your jobs," it later added. "We also believe that joining an outside labor union to address those concerns is not the answer."

The letter highlighted some commonly cited "disadvantages" of forming a union, such as the potentially high cost of monthly dues.

A few days later, Van Deusen sent an email to facilities employees responding to the administration's outreach.

"AFSCME, the labor union many of you are seeking to affiliate with, is aware that Management has been spreading false and misleading information in an effort to get you to NOT form a Union," it said, before addressing what it called "actual FACTS" about forming a union.

In the days following, some staff opposed to the union left flyers in certain shops and break rooms on campus, countering Van Deusen's points. Shortly after, the administration sent a list of FAQs to staff, based on questions it had received from facilities when administrators traveled shop-to-shop with Miller's first letter.

The union effort has not yet reached the strong majority within facilities that it needs to move forward. There is no specific benchmark for that number, Van Deusen said, but it would have to be a number with which the group would feel comfortable. Some staff said they see the slowing momentum as a sign the effort is doomed. But Van Deusen said authorization cards have not been circulating for long enough to determine whether the effort will succeed or not. He plans to continue to collect and tally cards.

If he could gather enough, staff would then need to file paperwork with the National Labors Relations Board (NLRB), an independent federal agency that protects the rights of private sector employees to better their working conditions and wages. The NLRB would then conduct a secret ballot election among facilities staff to decide whether a union would be formed.

If a majority opted for the formation of a union, the new effort would hold internal union elections for a bargaining team. From there, it would bargain a binding contract with the administration.

"This time next year, we would like to announce that a new union, with a contract, will be formed at Middlebury," Van Deusen said. He hopes that contract would address staff concerns by forming a labor management committee, creating a binding grievance procedure and paying better for longevity and overtime, among other measures.

Not every staff member is in favor of a union coming to campus. One custodial worker said she would not support the formation of a union because she is worried about losing her benefits in the negotiations, although she is unhappy with her current wages. She was offered a buyout last winter, but did not have to take it because another worker on her team did.

"I enjoy my vacation time," she said. "The health insurance isn't what it used to be, but that's changing in November, too. I enjoy my benefits."

According to Miller, the college will put in place a new healthcare system this November, to go into effect in January, that will introduce more choice into the current plan.

Although some employees worry their benefits will be at risk if they unionize, McCallum said he finds it hard to believe that the college would target workers' healthcare and benefits in negotiations.

"If Middlebury were to threaten the good benefits that workers now receive if they decided to go union, it would be joining a long list of union-busting corporations," he said.

Besides, he said that employees would have to agree on any union contract with the college.

"Workers vote on any contract a union signs, and they would only vote 'yes' on a contract when their benefits improved or stayed the same," he said.

McCallum said he sees collective bargaining as an "essential ingredient of a democratic workplace."

"We need a living wage here, where everyone can live and work with dignity, and that will mean paying workers what they deserve, not just what the market dictates," he added.

Middlebury's "Black Tuesday": A union effort three decades ago

The servery employee, who has worked at the college for 31 years and supports a union, was freshly employed at Middlebury when a series of job cuts in May 1991 destroyed a long-held perception of the institution as a reliable place to work. She remembers the day those positions were terminated, which has since come to be known by some as "Black Tuesday," as a day filled with tears and disbelief.

The college administration has taken measures to avoid an event like Black Tuesday from recurring. Patton told two Campus reporters in an article published by VTDigger this fall that memories of 1991 have influenced how the college currently handles staff reductions, emphasizing its focus on giving people more of a choice and inviting them to think about the long-term trajectory of the institution.

Miller emphasized a similar sentiment in her conversation with The Campus.

"I can say that we were intentional to make this as humane as we could, to make sure that this was not a surprise to people and that they were engaged in conversations," she said about this year's workforce planning. "We really worked hard to do that. Were we 100% successful? I hope so, but maybe not."

As in 1991, this recent round of workforce planning eliminated specific job "titles" rather than "people," and both years saw efforts to organize. In September of 1991, The Campus reported that staff across campus were "exploring ways to increase their input in administrative decisions." This included attempts by some to form a union, organizing for which would last four years before ultimately breaking down in 1995 after failing to garner enough support.

Those attempts were aimed at creating a wall-to-wall bargaining unit — a unit that would include all staff, unlike this year's single-department effort in facilities. Bill Jaeger, director of the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW), an AFSCME affiliate, helped spearhead that effort. His team was contacted by Middlebury employees in 1991, two years after HUCTW negotiated their own first contract.

Jaeger said attempts to unionize arose because of anger about the layoffs, but that at its core were more permanent longings for democratic change at the college.

"People were feeling like their eyes had been opened to how consequential and important it can be to have some breadth and some inclusion in important policy matters and in decision making," he said.

HUCTW members visited staff in Middlebury to talk about the union, at times once per week. Most interest came from those in administrative and technical jobs, although there was some level of support and involvement in all staff departments, Jaeger remembered. In response, the administration called all-staff meetings to address the efforts.

That union was not able to pique sufficient interest, but Jaeger said staff who were involved were united around a shared sense of excitement for what they were building. "Most people are driven in the most steadfast way if they're really building toward something that's going to make a positive difference in the long term," he said.

By 1995, when the effort fell, the college seemed to be undertaking corrective policies that gave employees some reason for hope.

College looks forward, staff still waiting for change

The college has reiterated time and time again that workforce planning is not a one-time process. This means that administrators are still assessing its successes, as well as where it's fallen short.

Administrators are hopeful that the workforce planning process will allow the institution to run more efficiently and proactively in the future. Some of the new jobs, for example — including some of the positions offered to staff whose positions were cut, requiring college degrees — are more specialized, and were intended to take into account potential demographic shifts in Vermont so that the college can be an "employer of choice for the next generation," Miller said.

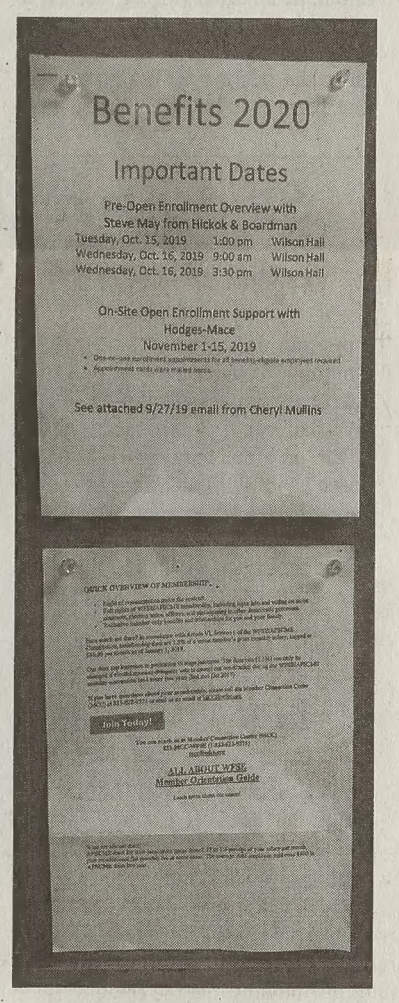
"The whole purpose of the workforce planning is we've got to be prepared for our future," she said. "I know it was a difficult process for many, but for some, I think it really helped us to transform and leap into that future state," she added, citing the How Will We Live Together review as a concurrent, future-oriented process.

Miller said that the administration is committed to revisiting any "pain points" among staff and addressing them accordingly. At an Oct. 24 staff meeting, Patton announced that Special Assistant to the President Sue Ritter will do a listening tour throughout staff departments to hear employees' concerns. The administration laid out its plan for the compensation review at that meeting, as well as several other measures, like a restatement that Senior Leadership Group would attend the holiday party this December, that suggest an effort to reinforce commitment to community-building.

The custodial worker and nearly every staff member interviewed for this article spoke about an intangible change that has made the working environment feel more corporate, and less warm and community-centered.

"When I first came here, it was different," the custodial worker said. "It was more family-oriented, and everybody looked out for each other. It's not like that anymore. It's more sterile."

Parsons, the staff council president, said Middlebury used to be a small institution with a real family feel. "As we have grown and expanded both our physical footprint here and our global footprint, we have some-


Benefits 2020
Important Dates
Pre-Open Enrollment Overview with
Steve May from Hickok & Boardman
Tuesday, Oct. 15, 2019 1:00 pm Wilson Hall
Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 9:00 am Wilson Hall
Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 3:30 pm Wilson Hall
On-Site Open Enrollment Support with
Hodges-Mace
November 1-15, 2019
See attached 9/27/19 email from Cheryl Mullins
Join Today!
ALL ABOUT WISE
Member Orientation Guide

SADIE HOUSBERG/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Flyers outside a breakroom in the service building display messages from the college about employee benefits (top flyer) and a flyer detailing information about AFSCME dues (bottom flyer).

what lost touch with that," he said.

"It would be a real challenge to bring that back," he added.

Staff also overwhelmingly expressed large amounts of pride in Middlebury as an institution, a collective sentiment that is backed up by data in the 2017 ModernThink survey.

"It's a great place," the first facilities worker said. "And the benefits are great. We're just underpaid for what we're doing."

This pride seems to leave many staff members feeling hopeful. But they're also worried that the college will continue to disappoint them. Some left initial workforce planning meetings a year ago with the impression that "everything was going to be open and that communication was going to flow."

"But it never did," one staff member said.

"With workforce planning, there were so many unanswered questions," he added. "The administration wouldn't have been able to do that without talking to the union first."

As the dust settles on the consequences of workforce planning, staff are still waiting to see tangible changes.

'Out of the mundane, into the sacred': College chaplain completes third pilgrimage to Mecca

By CECELIA SCHEUER
Senior Writer

Three years ago, Saifa Hussain, associate chaplain to the Muslim Student Association and Mosaic Interfaith House at Middlebury College, set out on a journey to connect more deeply to her faith. Now, at just 28 years old, she has fulfilled the pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca three times. It is a feat which all Muslims are obligated to complete once in their lifetime if they are physically and financially able.

The pilgrimage, also called the Hajj, is the last of the five major tenants of Islam, and takes place between the eighth and the 13th of Dhu al-Hijja, the 12th month of the Muslim calendar. Hussain performed her first Hajj the summer of 2017, and made her third pilgrimage to the holy city alongside her husband this past summer. However, her decision to trek across the world and make the trip three times, let alone once, was not always part of her shorter-term agenda.

"Back then, I never thought about making the Hajj pilgrimage," Hussain said, explaining that it is an undertaking many Muslims save up their entire lives for. "It was originally something that I was planning to do when I was much older."

Hussain decided to make her first pilgrimage while living in a micro home built by her husband on a farm in New Haven, Vt. They had moved there from Chicago in the spring of 2017 to practice sustainable living, minimalism and Islamic spirituality. At the time, making the cost-hefty journey did not seem possible. That is, until her change in lifestyle began to shift Hussain's conception of her own spirituality.

"A lot of it was fueled by me negotiating my various identities and seeking out teachers and spiritual guides to help me connect deeper to my faith," Hussain said. "One of the things that they advised me to do was to make the Hajj pilgrimage."

The holy pilgrimage, they told her, was "central to rooting yourself as a Muslim in a modern American context."

She began looking at Hajj packages online, and that August, she left to meet the group she had been matched with. Hussain said it is common to make the pilgrimage in a group, and that there is a "whole industry" connecting Muslims from all over the world who wish to make the trip with others traveling from similar areas.

After meeting her group in Chicago, they flew to Germany and then to Jeddah, the gateway for pilgrimages to Mecca. Their spiritual journey, however, began on the flight to Jeddah, during which the group entered the purification state of Ihram, which is required before one embarks on the Hajj pilgrimage. In order to fully achieve Ihram, one must pass through several points around Mecca called the Miquat, the first of which the group happened to pass on the plane.

"There were pilgrims on the plane getting into this Ihram state, putting on the clothing, making the intention, starting their reciting," Hussain said.

While in this state, men must dress in a traditional white cloth, and a variety of practices are prohibited, such as bathing with scented products, clipping nails, cutting hair, wearing perfume or having sexual intercourse.

"You really go into this liminal state where you are out of the ordinary and are in this monastic, austere way of being," she said.

This past summer, Hussain's Hajj journey once again began in Jeddah, where her group was picked up by a bus which made the day-long drive to Mecca. Once there, they rested and prepared to perform the rituals of the Hajj that would take place in the days ahead.

Each day of the pilgrimage is separated into distinct rituals, many of which are dedicated to the life of the prophet Abraham. On the first day, Hussain's group performed the tawaf, which entails walking seven times, counter-clockwise, around a black cube-like structure called the Ka'ba. In the Islamic tradition, this is the point where heaven and earth meet, but more than that, Hussain said, it is the point which Muslims consider to be "the center of their spiritual universe."

"It represents this circular movement of oneness, and you're doing this with millions of pilgrims from all walks of life," she said.

Next, they passed between the hills of Safa and Marwa to commemorate the struggles of the Lady Hagar. Along the way, they also drank holy water from the well of ZamZam, which is meant to replenish pilgrims who "experience the intensity of the heat and the struggle of these rituals," she said.

The next day, they traveled to the tent city of Mina and then to the Plain of Arafat in Mina for a day of vigil and prayer.

"This is the encounter of a lifetime with God," Hussain said.

Hussain said it was a highly emotional experience during which she felt that many pilgrims were in "a complete state of submission." She and millions of other pilgrims stopped to just cry.

AUGUST SCHULTZ/MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

College Chaplain Hussain was originally planning to make the journey when she was much older, until a change in lifestyle began to shift her conception of her own spirituality.

"You go there with all of your life in your heart and all of other people's lives in your heart," she said.

Hussain was one of the millions of people who took prayers of their loved ones with them to read on the pilgrimage. Before she left, she created a shared Google document for others to write their prayers on, which she then read off of her phone at various points throughout the Hajj. Hussain extended this offer to Muslim students at Middlebury, too.

Visit middleburycampus.com to watch the video interview

After traveling from Arafat to Muzdalifa to spend a night in the desert, she returned to Mecca with her group to perform the next ritual, the Jamrat. During this ritual, pilgrims stone the pillar of Jamrat, an act that symbolizes casting away the negativity in one's life. Hussain said many pilgrims believe that when they throw the stones, they are hitting the devil.

Once these major rituals have taken place, an animal is sacrificed, which allows a pilgrim to exit the purification state of Ihram. To signify this transition, men will typically shave their head and women will cut off around an inch of their hair. Pilgrims are then also allowed to resume their normal hygienic practices.

The last ritual of Hussain's Hajj took place in Mecca, where she returned to perform the farewell tawaf, this time from outside the state of Ihram. With each journey into and out of the state of Ihram, Hussain said her life changed in ways that have allowed her to realize the meaning of her connection to God and who she truly is as a spiritual being.

"The Hajj takes you out of autopilot, and that is the purpose of pilgrimage," Hussain said. "To get out of the mundane and into the sacred ... What it did for me is that it disrupted the monotony, or the human sort of heedlessness that we often find ourselves in."

Ultimately, Hussain's journey to step out of the mundane of everyday life is one that she knows will be ongoing, which is why she plans to make the Hajj every year.

"It doesn't mean you have to have it all figured out, but I think it's the questioning that's important," she said. "Because if we can't question things, then we will just be in autopilot forever."

Students and staff opine on commons changes that will streamline ResLife

Continued from Page 2

a program in the fall [where] we did a number of series of events for first-year students, specifically," Place said. "We had our first program with the CTLR on time management, which doesn't sound like a fun topic, but we had well over 60 people at [the event] just here in Stewart. That tells me that students value having that [kind of resource] right here and that we've missed the mark on not doing that."

With this shift, the administration hopes to have deans work in concert — rather than individually — to promote student wellness.

"When we think about what mental health is, when you think about health in general, it's not just responding to problems, it's about prevention," Moeller said. "We've got all these great people on campus. We don't need to just be in crisis response mode. Let's start to use these skills in meaningful ways to really help all students."

History of the commons

While the commons shape current students' perceptions of how Middlebury organizes housing and residential life, this was not always the case. American Studies Professor Tim Spears was a member of the 1998 Residential Life Committee that fleshed out the College's original idea for the commons system.

Spears said the original plan stipulated that each commons would have housing for all four classes, a dining hall, a dean's office, and housing for the faculty head. If fully realized, these commons would have resembled Ross and Atwater facilities.

While this original plan was passed with hopes of creating five "microcosms" that would function together as the Middlebury experience, the plan was drastically altered in 2007, when it became clear that the college did not possess the financial means to build the infrastructure required by the 1998 plan. The last commons construction project was Atwater, which occurred at the same time the Davis Family Library was being built in 2004.

Due to the financial constraints, the college turned to a 4/2 plan, which features "a 4-year commons affiliation and a 2-year residency," as described by a blog post written by Spears and dated September, 2007. This is the plan students at Middlebury have come to know — a plan under which students maintain their relationship with their commons Deans for the duration of their college experience, while only living within their commons for half of that time.

The 4/2 plan looked to keep the elements of the commons that had already been implemented, while letting go of the price tags required by the original framework. Though the move saved the college millions of dollars, it left the original commons vision largely unrealized.

Karl Lindholm, a retired American Studies professor who has worked in all five commons, including as faculty head of Atwater and the dean of Cook, explained that the idea behind the plan was to "decentralize" administrative offices.

"The word that was on everybody's lips was decentralization," he said. "In other words, we decentralized the Dean of Students office."

Spears, who was the dean of the college when the 4/2 plan went into effect, said the goal of this decentralization was to create well-resourced communities to enhance the student experience. He wrote on his blog that he was saddened by the move away from the original vision of the commons, but that the shift was made with the belief that inter-commons relationships would be enough to sustain the reduced system.

"You build connections with students or faculty and commons staff during your first year or two, and then you move off and do other things, but those connections bring you back to the commons," he said.

Those benefits were reflected in the 2018 survey — over 65% of students reported that the commons helped them to get to know other students, while 58% reported that the commons system helped them meet other people.

While the commons spurred inter-student connections, the data did not support the idea that the commons was central to community building, which was the intention behind its implementation.

"The impact [of the commons system] is only being seen mostly in the first two years and in a very small number of students, and it's a very expensive program," said Baishakhi Taylor, the Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students.

John Gosselin, a senior who has served both on Community Council and on the How Will We Live Together Steering Committee, said that the faculty head model in particular does not make financial sense.

"The role of the commons heads originally worked a lot better than they do now," he said. "The way it works now is we have very small dinners that cost $150,000 to cater for the five houses. That money could be spent better elsewhere."

MAX PADILLA/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Hadley Hall, currently a first-year residence hall, will house sophomores in the upcoming year, as will the rest of the Ross complex.

Gosselin said three people could be hired to work directly with students for the same amount of money.

Though the college has not confirmed whether the commons heads positions will be eliminated in the new model, there is no evidence suggesting that positions will carry over. The recommendations submitted by the Steering Committee describe the faculty head model as "real," but says that "the preponderance of evidence suggests that [the reach of the faculty head position] is limited to a relatively small number of students, and relatively limited in scope, manifesting mainly as hosting dinner events."

Both the Steering Committee and the administration used information gathered in the 2018 Student Residential Life Survey to support the idea that the common head positions are largely ineffective: data show that only 32% of students report having gotten to know their commons head.

Spears said that it is a "fair question" to assess how impactful the faculty head position is, especially because faculty are moving beyond the classroom, in some capacity, to serve in that role. He also noted figures such as those provided by the survey are hard to interpret.

"Just putting a number on it doesn't really explain whether or how faculty are enhancing residential life and benefitting particular students," he said.

Even if over 50% of students surveyed reported not having gotten to know their faculty head, it remains difficult to imagine eliminating the position, which is founded on support and care, Spears said.

"I'm sensitive to the fact that, in doing these interviews and meeting with people, there isn't one single person connected to the current system who didn't put their heart and soul into it," Moeller said. "Each person really cares about students. Sometimes it's difficult being told that you're a part of something that's not working as well as it should — it's hard to hear that you've been pouring your soul into something and the outcomes clearly are not where they should be."

Commons senators and student res life staff opine

Many students involved in the commons feel they were not properly consulted regarding the upcoming changes. Myles Maxie '22, Middlebury's Wonnacott Senator, is worried about how students will represent themselves given that the recommendations do not specify how the Student Government Association will change with the elimination of the commons. The current structure has five Senate positions affiliated with the commons — one seat to each commons — and the possible elimination of those positions would decrease senate seats by one third.

"I don't appreciate the fact that this [new] system doesn't have full thought behind it," Maxie said. "They're unsure on the status of commons councils, given the fact that they've removed the commons."

Teddy Best '22, who serves as Ross commons Senator, expressed a similar worry.

"I am concerned that the administration did not notify commons senators or commons councils of where they were headed with this process," he said. "There's no doubt there are problems with the commons system — that isn't the question. The question is, what should we do about it? If it's the case that the commons system is going to be abolished, that seems like a drastic response."

Maxie also identified poor communication during the plan's creation as a source of concern. While the commons senators were told about the impending changes before the rest of the student body, many feel they were not adequately involved in the review process.

"I don't appreciate the lack of transparency that exists throughout this process," he said. "This report is titled How Will We Live Together, and how can you live together with people when you can't trust them to actually tell you the details on how they're completing this process?"

Maxie and Best are not alone — residential life staff, including Ross Community Assistant Steph Miller '20, expressed concern with the move away from the commons structure.

"I think a lot was overlooked in the ways these reviews were done," Miller said. "I think some of the reviews were done hastily. The external reviewers were on campus for less than two or three days," said Miller, who also expressed concern with the methods used to conduct the review.

"They didn't talk to that many people and they didn't talk to the [commons] teams as a collective," she said. "I think if they had done that, they would've seen what is so magical about the commons."

The Steering Committee, however, viewed the process differently.

"I don't think there's anything we could do that would have made this more transparent," Moeller said. "Everything, the notes, the meetings, the reports on the go site. We would actually send out email invites to groups, blasting out [messages and] saying, 'who's willing to come for 40 minutes, an hour?'"

The past week has seen little public backlash to the elimination of the commons system, but it is a dimension of this announcement that is undeniably present. Though the greater student body has, for the most part, shown indifference towards the changes, many people affiliated with the commons and their offices were not available for comment or unwilling to speak on the record for this story, and several alluded to feelings of uncertainty and sadness at the prospect of moving away from the commons system.

Tiny House Fest offers big solutions to big problems

By LUCY TOWNEND
Copy Editor

WARREN — The solution to the affordable housing crisis may come in small sizes. Hundreds gathered at the Tiny House Fest despite pouring rain on Sunday, Oct. 27 to engage in discussion and celebrate the tiny house movement. The festival, held at Sugarbush Ski Resort in Warren, boasted three stages for speakers, exhibitions, a tiny house village and a food truck roundup.

Tiny homes form a new trend in the movement for affordable and sustainable living. Most consist of less than 400 square feet of living space yet are functional — stocked with appliances, storage and heating and cooling systems. Some are also made for transport, equipped with wheels or mounted on a trailer. Attendees of the festival learned from others, regardless of their experience in this tiny house world.

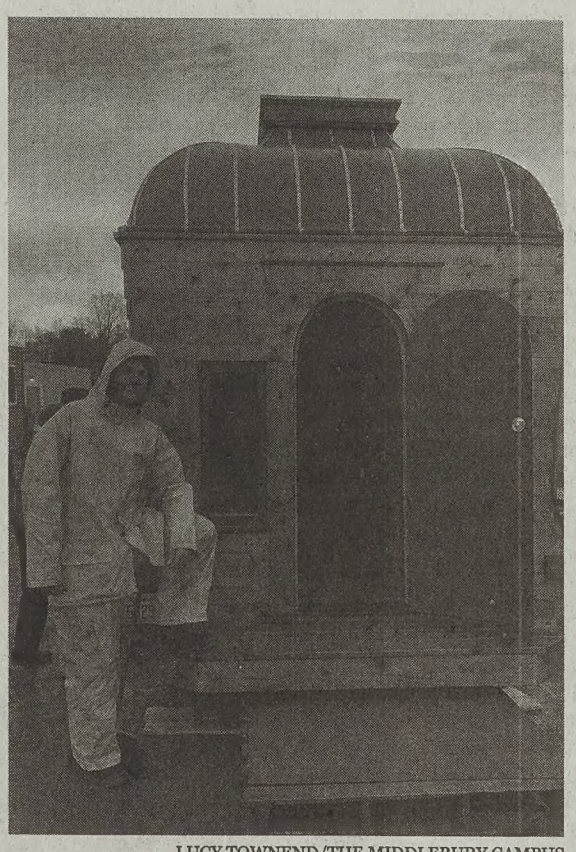
According to the Tiny House Fest website, Erin Maile O'Keefe, Betsy Hall and Lisa Kuneman began the Tiny House Fest in the spring of 2016 in Brattleboro, Vt. The goal was to open up a conversation surrounding attainable housing, focusing on "housing, housing equity, right-sized housing, sustainable housing and the like."

The event included speakers and panels on three stages, focused on design, community vision and storytelling about tiny houses. Talks ranged from "Don't Get Sketched-Out over SketchUp" to "The Journey to Going Live on AirBnB with Your Tiny House: Steps from A to Z." One of the panelists, Mary Beth Simons, created Homes First, an initiative to start a dialogue about tiny homes in Middlebury. Simons was featured on a panel titled "Tiny Houses — Wedging Open the Conversation About Housing and Community" and is hoping to start a tiny house village in Middlebury.

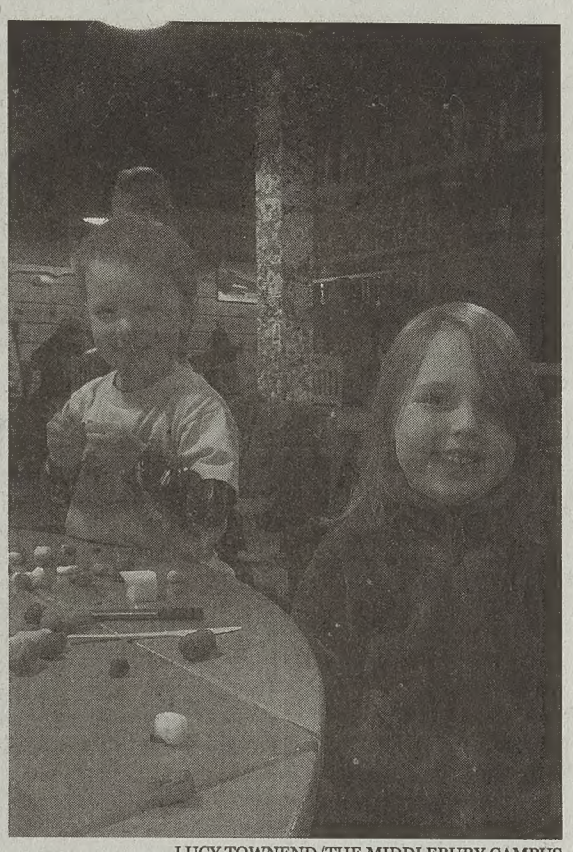
People had various reasons to attend this year's festival. "I came here to see what other people are doing," Andrew Bernard said, "and to help build the web of connection in tiny living a little bigger." Bernard, who works for Ridge Top Carpentry, brought his tiny house to Warren to be displayed in the festival's tiny house village. His house is made on a stripped-down 76 chaster frame he found and consists partly of materials he was able to scrounge up from his community. His inspiration was drawn from old carriage builders from the late 1900s in New England.

Tyler Pastorak was part of a group of students from Green Mountain College who built a tiny home with the help of a professor. The home, which currently houses one of the students on the property of the professor, was also displayed in the tiny house village. "For me, what I was studying in school was adventurary education," Pastorak said, "and it really helped me examine my lifestyle because you have to boil your whole life down into a backpack or fit on a bicycle." He emphasized that anyone, including inexperienced students, can build a tiny house with the help of YouTube videos. "The tiny house is this nice bridge between full-on backpacking and having a giant house," Pastorak said.

"There are always new innovations," said Casey Hess, a volunteer at the event who studies environmental law at Vermont Law School. "I'm looking to get involved in energy efficiency and sustainability," she said.



LUCY TOWNEND/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Andrew Bernard of Ridge Top Carpentry brought his own tiny house to the festival.



LUCY TOWNEND/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Zora and Evan, children of festival attendee Meredity Merritt, enjoy the Makerspace.

"It's a punk rock movement," said Michael Zebrowski, owner and lead designer of Up End This, a nomadic lifestyle brand that custom designs mobile tiny homes. "This is the core of what I've wanted to do since I was a teenager — it's broody, and municipalities don't like it."

Zebrowski approached one of his students, Kris Brown, when Brown was a junior in college to begin Up End This.

"I said hell yeah, let's do it," Brown said. "Simplistic is the best way to clean your mind. If you want to refine your peace, simple, small and tiny is the way."

Other exhibitionists included designing services, products including toilets, windows and pottery and financial help. Architects also offered 25-minutes "speed design reviews" for attendees hoping to build their own tiny house.

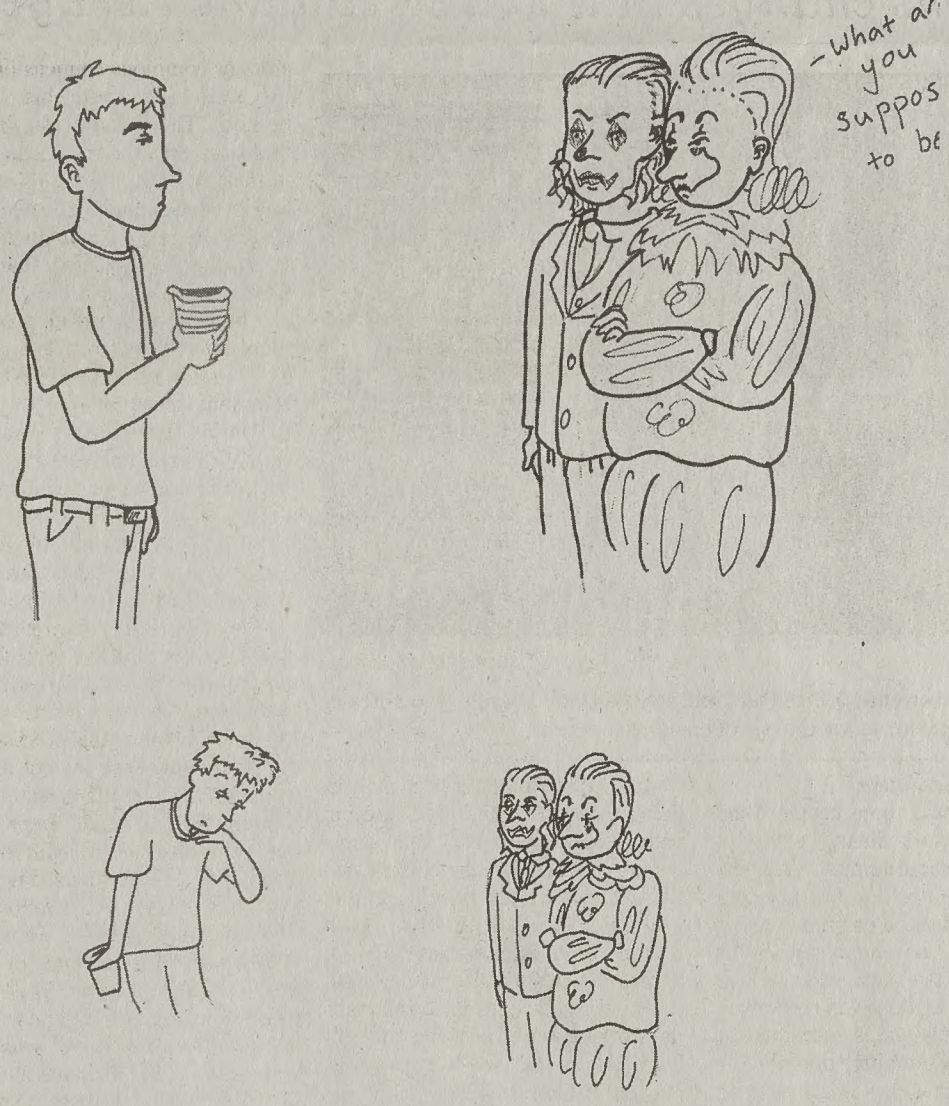
Rebekah Owens attended the event to do market research for her start-up company, Tiny Homes Helper Inc., which is set up as a benefit company to help people design, build and live a tiny house lifestyle. "I believe very strongly in the tiny house movement," Owens said. "I want to see everyone who wants to live in a tiny house be successful at it."

Attendees remained optimistic about the momentum of the movement and the role it will play in the future of housing. "As much as tiny houses offer a solution for those of us who have too much, it is also a solution for people who don't have enough," Owens said.

"I think it's a great thing we got going on here," Bernard added. "I'm more than happy to be a part of it."

SPOOKY CARTOONS

PIA CONTRERAS



WHISTLEBLOWER by JENNY MOSS

PIA CONTRERAS

Tac(o) of the town: Long-awaited taqueria opens at Stone Mill

By MELANIE CHOW
Contributing Writer

The Mad Taco and other retailers were welcomed to Middlebury by a large and hungry crowd last Saturday at the Stone Mill's soft opening, which showcased the multi-purpose space's new cast of restaurants and retailers. Middlebury residents and college students alike headed down to Mill Street for the Vermont taqueria's much anticipated opening. By 5:30 p.m., the restaurant was abuzz with activity.

While there has been a lot of commotion around the arrival of The Mad Taco, the restaurant is just one of the new tenants of the new Stone Mill complex. The Stone Mill, formerly owned by Middlebury College, was bought by Mary Cullinane and Stacey Rainey of Community Barn Ventures in January of this year. The two transformed the building into a multipurpose space that now features The Mad Taco, The Arcadian To-Go, Dedalus Wine Shop, the interior designer Slate Home, Lost Monarch Coffee, a coworking space and Airbnb units.

The Mad Taco is located on the bottom floor, which used to house Storm Café. One of the employees at The Mad Taco, Nate Davis, said that there were moments when they were not sure the restaurant would be ready for the soft opening, as the space is not completely finished. After a few more finishing touches are put in place, The Mad Taco hopes to hold a grand opening on a to-be-announced date in the near future.

"We want to have a place for everybody to have fun," Davis said. He said that the opening was successful, even with very little media promotion.

The menu at Middlebury's Mad Taco is the same as the one featured at the taqueria's original Waitsfield location. A variety of chicken, pork, beef and vegetable tacos are available, including smoked pork belly, a favorite of the Saturday crowd. The tacos are served on a double wrapped soft shell and are generously stuffed. A wide selection of burritos, fajitas and sandwiches are also available, alongside an impressive collection of homemade hot sauces, ranging from mild to very hot, as well as a full bar stocked with lots of Vermont IPAs.

MELANIE CHOW/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
The Mad Taco's menu in Middlebury includes a wide variety of tacos, topped with generous helpings of cilantro.

Davis explained that Cullinane and Rainey approached The Mad Taco during the planning stages of the project about the possibility of being part of the complex. The two had been big fans of the location in Waitsfield, Vt.

On the ground floor of the Stone Mill, Cullinane and Rainey were manning the register at the Public Market, a collection of small stands representing various local businesses. The featured stores include Slate Home, which sells a range of homegoods from soap to coasters to kitchen supplies. The Slate Home team designed its own space to have a modern and slightly industrial feel.

The Vermont Book Shop and Dedalus Wine Shop also have stalls at Public Market. Dedalus Wine Shop was in the middle of a tasting on Saturday evening, an event which will occur regularly, according to Rainey. Lost Monarch Coffee is also a part of the market, with a seating area to grab a coffee and pastry.

The market also features a stall curated by Cullinane and Rainey called the Stone Mill Collective, which showcases the entrepreneurial ventures of Middlebury students and alumni.

When speaking about their goals for the space, Rainey and Cullinane said that they wanted to provide a multipurpose space where visitors can "grab a present, get a coffee, and head to work upstairs."

"I really wanted to dive into the community and provide another spot for people to gather," Rainey said. She and Cullinane have lived in Middlebury and been business partners for several years.

The opening welcomed a wide range of people from the Midd community, including students, families and retirees. When asked about what demographics she had hoped to see, Rainey said that she was thrilled with the variety of customers who came through the market on Saturday. "That's the special part," she said. "There's been a lot of students who've been through the building. Families, some older retired folks, tourists. It's been across the board, which is what we wanted."

Rainey is also excited to bring more Vermont businesses to Middlebury.

"While it would be costly to have a full store up on Main Street, having a stall here gives these businesses an opportunity to test the market and expand their platform."

The Public Market is now open Wednesday through Monday from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. The Mad Taco is open daily from 11:30 a.m. – 9 p.m., and will close on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and July 4.

MELANIE CHOW/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Diners enjoyed the soft opening of The Mad Taco on the terrace of the Stone Mill last Saturday.

MELANIE CHOW/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
The Mad Taco is open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily. It hosts a full bar that features local beers and ciders, as well as spirits and cocktails.

Vermont's minimum wage to increase

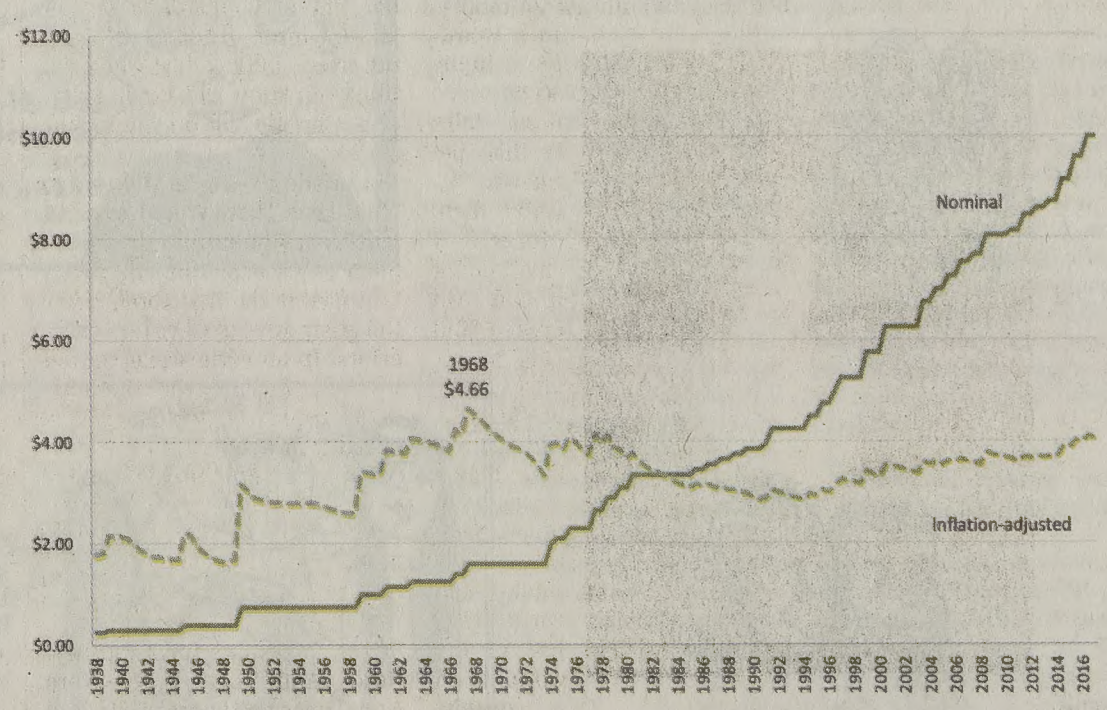
By ANNA WOOD
Staff Writer

Vermont's minimum wage will increase by 18 cents on Jan. 1, 2020, bringing the hourly wage to $10.96. The tipped wage, for state employees that receive the majority of their earnings through tips, will increase up $5.48, an increase of 9 cents.

In 2014, the state passed Act 176, which raised Vermont's 2017 minimum wage to $10. Under this law, minimum wage increases by the rate of inflation as long as the percentage increase falls below 5%, which has not occurred since 1990. The state determines the rate of inflation from the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and assures the change in minimum wage complies with the cost of living adjustment. Yet, the real wage value is still less than it was 50 years ago. Michael Harrington, acting commissioner of the Vermont Department of Labor, still believes the small pay boost will benefit workers.

"Any time we see natural growth in the minimum wage, as we do now, is good," Harrington said. "I think employees will certainly find value in this increase, even though it is a small amount."

Although the Vermont minimum wage has continuously increased over the last decade, the 2020 change is less than last year, when minimum wage rose by 28 cents. Furthermore, according to a study by the Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office, Vermont's single-person livable wage is $15 – $18, and the average living wage is $13.34. According to Peter Matthews, Middlebury professor of economics, minimum wage has yet to satisfy the standard cost of living.



COURTESY GRAPH
Vemont's minimum wage has increased rapidly over recent years using the consumer price index (CPI), according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"Even in the best-case scenario — a household with two full-time adult workers and no children – the current minimum wage falls well short of basic needs, as calculated by the Joint Fiscal Office of the Vermont legislature, and will continue to do so," he said.

Tied with Arizona, Vermont's minimum wage is the sixth highest in the United States and is significantly higher than New Hampshire's federal minimum wage of $7.25. However, the minimum wage does not necessarily correlate to the state's cost of living.

Vermont resident Emily Klar '21 spoke to the disparity between income and living expenses. Two summers ago, Klar was an employee at Dunkin Donuts where she worked lots of overtime hours. She says she also held a second job for a while.

"Some weeks, I was working about 60–70 hours," she said. "I was still barely able to save any money, and all I was paying for were gas and minor expenses. The expenses while working that kind of job were impossible to meet."

According to Matthews, more than half of minimum wage workers in Vermont are full-time. "The sectors in which the current minimum wage is most salient include service — food, education and health — and retail," he said.

In recent years, the Vermont House and Senate have considered several proposals to further increase minimum wage. House Bill 93/Senate Bill 40, the most supported bill thus far, would increase the minimum wage by $1 every Jan. 1 from 2018–2021, then by $1.5 in 2022 before maxing out at $15. If this bill was enacted, Vermont would tie with California for the highest minimum wage in the country. Advocates, such as state lawmakers and Vermonters, argue that a $15 wage would promote spending in local businesses and in turn boost the state economy. Opponents point to the higher cost for labor and the inevitable cutback of existing employees. In an article published by the Ethan Allen Institute, the authors write that a drastic increase in minimum wage would negatively affect underrepresented, underprivileged demographics, leading to structural unemployment in low skilled workers. In addition to the decrease in labor demand, businesses, unable to meet higher labor costs, would fail altogether.

When asked how the economy would respond to a $15 minimum wage, Professor Matthews emphasized the importance of national cohestivity. "Under ideal circumstances, the federal minimum wage would increase to $15 or more, and all states would be brought along," Matthews said. He also said that an estimated 40 million workers would benefit from increased living standards. As stated in Vermont's Joint Fiscal Office's April report, "pronounced and growing minimum wage rate differential with New Hampshire and other states at or near the Federal minimum wage of $7.25 represents a potential economic risk." The differential between Vermont and New Hampshire's minimum wage is "the largest historical spread on record."

Most recently, Governor Phill Scott vetoed a bill backed by Vermont Senate to raise minimum wage to $15 by 2024. Democratic leaders of the Vermont House and Senate have been unable to find common ground on legislation regarding this prospect.

RAINBOOTS AND REESE'S: 12TH ANNUAL SPOOKTACULAR BRINGS HALLOWEEN FESTIVITIES DESPITE WEATHER

By HAEUN PARK
Contributing Writer

Families dressed in costumes, posed for pictures, danced to live music and munched on bags of fresh-popped popcorn. A NASA toddler in a tinfoil hat and a painted cardboard rocket waited patiently in line for face-painting. A mini Evil Queen and a black fruit bat played a life-sized game of Connect 4. Multiple Spider-Men and one Spider Gwen chased each other in front of the bubble machine. In the meantime, parents holding umbrellas stood on the grass and waited for the parade, Spooktacular's main event, to begin.

The Better Middlebury Partnership hosted its 12th Annual Spooktacular on the Town Green this past Sunday, Oct. 27. Despite a steady drizzle of rain, kids flocked to game stations and activity tables operated by volunteers. Visitors could enjoy games, face-painting, bubbles and a craft table, alongside dancing and halloween-themed treats.

Nancie Dunn, the primary organizer of Spooktacular, started the event 14 years ago and has been hosting it with the help of her husband, Bruce Baker, ever since. For Dunn, the idea for Spooktacular rose out of a need she saw for a community-based Halloween event.

"When my kids were little, there was a parade and a bonfire that the Middlebury Parks and Recreation put on, and then there was nothing," Dunn said. "So I thought with this cute town we needed to make something." That was when Dunn got the idea for Spooktacular, which she and Baker have been running ever since.

"We had good weather last year and saw about 500 kids," Baker said. "Because of the weather, this year was the most challenging year out of the 14." The covered gazebo in the middle of the Town Green served as not only a refuge from the rain but also as the center of activity from where Baker played live music.

"My favorite part is right here at the gazebo," Baker said. "All the kids come up, and the ones that are gregarious dance with me and have fun."

Lauren Laberge, in charge of face-painting station, is one of the committee members who organizes the event every year.

"It's cute to see the families come out all dressed up," Laberge said. "I think they love it because you don't always get an opportunity with your kids to be a part of something with costumes."

Sarah Stahl, who oversees the crafts, is another committee member.

"[Spooktacular] is different from trick-or-treating in the dark," Stahl said. "This is a daytime event, and it's free. Some mother even said to me: 'Thank you for doing this. This is all we do for Halloween.'"

At 2:30 p.m., Dunn, dressed as the Spooktacular Witch, led the group in a parade through the town. All through Main Street, merchants, some in costume, stood outside their shop fronts with bowls full of candy ready to be dropped in the children's waiting bags. Audra Ouellette has participated in Spooktacular for all the three years she has been an employee at Sweet Cecily, a local home goods retailer.

"My favorite part about the event are the little faces that come through with costumes on," Ouellette said. "There's almost no preparation the vendors have to do beforehand. Nancie supplies everyone with the candy. It's perfect." As kids walked past Dunn with bags heavy of sweets, they waved at the Spooktacular Witch and headed home.

"It's a real nice community thing," Baker said. "It gives people who might not be able to afford to do anything special on their own an opportunity to get dressed up with their kids and have a great time."

BENJY RENTON/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

DON'T READ THESE BOOKS ALONE

By JOHN VAALER
Staff Writer

For the bookish among us, Halloween is a perfect time to revisit some of the spookiest tomes ever written. Brace yourselves for my top three fear-inducing books of all time. Don't read this article alone.

I'm giving third place to **Ford Maddox Ford's "The Good Soldier" (1915)**. The novel tells the story of four early 20th-century couples: two hopelessly naive Americans, and two world-weary Brits. John Dowell, the American narrator, tries to make sense of his shattered world after discovering that his wife had a long-term affair with Captain Edward Ashburnham, Dowell's only friend. Meanwhile, Briton Lenora Ashburnham schemes against her philandering husband.

In a sinister plot twist, Ford even adds one or two possible murders. I write "possible" since Ford's protagonist is a confused, laughably unreliable narrator. Consider this rambling passage: "I don't attach any particular importance to these generalizations of mine. They may be right; they may be wrong; I am only an ageing American with very little knowledge of life." Beneath Dowell's bumbling language lies unnavigable darkness.

Psychological horror does not often feature in romantic novels. The most heart-stopping scene in "Pride and Prejudice" (1813), for instance, is when Jane Bennet gets a bad cold. But "The Good Soldier," despite its lusty beginnings, slowly becomes an utter nightmare. "I know nothing — nothing in the world — of the hearts of men," relates Dowell. "I only know that I am alone — horribly alone. No hearthstone will ever again witness, for me, friendly intercourse." Note the use of the word "intercourse." Ford writes about sex in the same way that horror writer H.P Lovecraft characterizes the cosmic entity Cthulhu in the eponymous short story: as an ominous, primordial reckoning.

"The Good Soldier" ends with Nancy Rufford, the Ashburnham's ward, descending into madness. After Nancy falls for Captain Ashburnham, the four main characters unite in banishing her to India. She spends the rest of her days in a madhouse, murmuring "Credo in unum Deum omnipotentem" [I believe in one all-powerful God] over and over again. Like Nancy's recitation of the Nicene Creed, "The Good Soldier" will haunt you long after you have reached the story's end.

My runner-up is **"The Woman In White" (1859)** by Wilkie Collins. T.S. Eliot wrote, in the introduction to a 1928 edition of the book, that Collins's other great novel, "The Moonstone," is "the first, the longest, and the best of modern English detective novels in a genre invented by Collins and not by [Edgar Allen] Poe." "The Woman In White" has even more sleuthing than "The Moonstone" (1868). But while the latter book has a comic tone, "The Woman In White" invokes pure dread.

COURTESY PHOTO

The novel's opening scene is simple, but spooky. Walter Hartright, an impoverished drawing teacher, walks through the streets of London late at night. From out of the fog appears a young woman clad in pale tatters. She asks for some directions, but then suddenly flees. We learn that her name is Anne Catherick, and that Anne has recently escaped from a ward for the criminally insane.

Some months after this strange encounter, Walter falls in love with Laura Fairlie, a wealthy art student. All is well for a bit, but developments arise. For one, Anne Catherick is stalking Walter. For another, Laura gets engaged to Sir Percival Glyde, an old rake who values his fiancée's dowry a bit too much.

I shall divulge no more of the novel's plot; "The Woman In White" is too good a book to be spoiled. Let us suffice to say that identity theft, mail fraud, false imprisonment and a nationalist Italian spy ring all feature in Collins's blood-curdling narrative.

What makes Collins's novel truly terrifying, though, is its main villain, the plumply evil, wickedly charming Count Fosco. The Count likes to sing church hymnals, drug unsuspecting heiresses and murder for money. In a weirdly funny scene, he even talks to his pet mouse. "... And then, Mouse, I shall doubt if your own eyes and ears are really of any use to you. Ah! I am a bad man... I say what other people only think, and when all the rest of the world is in a conspiracy to accept the mask for the true face, mine is the rash hand that tears off the plump pasteboard, and shows the bare bones beneath." Cynical and sadistic, Count Fosco raises the novel's stakes to a fever pitch. Move over, "Rebecca" (1938) — "The Woman In White" easily dwarfs all other English country-house thrillers.

I'm giving some honourable mentions before I unveil my top winner. "The Raven" (1845) by Edgar Allen Poe has not lost its neurotic punch over the years. Try reading the poem aloud for optimal spookiness — Poe's jumpy style suits the spoken word perfectly. Another great scary read is Donna Tartt's "The Secret History" (1992), a bleak character study about six students at a liberal arts college in Vermont. (If you are a fan of Vermont horror stories, I also recommend our article on the vandalism at Atwater A and B).

But **Agatha Christie's "And Then There Were None"** gets my Spooky Story Gold Medal. Unlike my third and second place winners, Christie's sparse novel can be read in one sitting. It tells the story of ten perfect strangers who are stuck on an island vacation resort. One of the guests, we discover, is a psychopathic murderer. Who could the bad guy be? Phillip Lombard, a dapper gun-for-hire? Thomas Rogers, the creepy butler? Just when you think you know who the murderer is, Christie kills off your prime suspect.

Christie gives a ghostly aura to "And Then There Were None." In particular, the novel's dream sequences are unsettling: they contain flashbacks that foreshadow the grisly fates of Christie's characters. In an eerie scene, an old woman speculates that the murders are a divine judgement. She is right, in a sense: all the people trapped on the island have their own demons to confront. Even before the novel's climax, it becomes clear that Christie's characters are all going on a one-way ticket to Hell; the murderer merely expedites their journey. Read "And Then There Were None" once for the scary bits, and then read it again just to marvel at Christie's athletic prose.

So that's my list. And, yes: I am aware that I have neglected some of the horror genre's usual suspects. Stephen King, Mary Shelley and dozens of other fine writers did not make my final cut. I suppose that is because I don't find fantasy a particularly exciting genre. "It" (1986) and "Dracula" (1897) have fangs galore, but the mundane wickedness of "The Good Soldier" is to me much more terrifying. The books that get under my skin understand the demons of the human condition; true scariness confronts the monsters of everyday life. The horror, dear Brutus, is not in our Count Draculas, but ourselves.

REEL CRITIC: SHUTTER ISLAND

By OWEN MASON-HILL
Staff Columnist

For this week's issue of Reel Critic, I was asked to pick a scary movie to review. For the sake of providing insight into what I believe to be an extremely underrated film, I decided to review Martin Scorsese's "Shutter Island" (2010). "Shutter Island" is a psychological thriller of utmost manipulation. In the hands of an able and brilliant filmmaker such as Scorsese, the viewer is ready and willing to forgo any sense of control and hand over their fate. In this film, there isn't the common sense of fear; no jumpscares that shock your body to the core. Yet somehow "Shutter Island" is the scariest film I've seen in quite some time. It preys upon the very origin of fear: lack of control. Scorsese manipulates this, contorts it, and presses so firmly on the vein of fear that one cannot help but grasp their chair with white knuckles for the entirety of its duration.

In post-WWII America, U.S. Marshall Teddy Daniels (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his new partner Chuck (Mark Ruffalo) have been tasked with investigating the mysterious disappearance of a child-murdering mother from Shutter Island, a place that houses the country's most violent, criminally insane patients. There is only one way to enter and exit the island, the shabby old ferry that transports Teddy and Chuck upon their arrival. Right from the outset, something is amiss. There is an unavoidable feeling that everyone is withholding information.

Before the film even begins, the low reverb of Laeta Kalogridis's score echoes under the opening credits, conveying a forboding message of dread and ominousness. Teddy and Chuck are unmistakably outsiders. Despite being called in to investigate, it is palpable that they are unwanted. The camera hides behind the inhabitants of the island, peering through the bushes, over tables and looking down from above, making the viewer view the marshalls not as they see themselves, but as they are seen by those around them. Information on the island is sparse and comes only in random dottings.

Upon their immediate arrival, it is clear that Teddy and Chuck have no control. They must surrender their weapons, leaving them defenseless, and are subject to the laws and authorities of the island due to a Massachusetts constitutional subsection. Much like Teddy and his partner, the viewer has forsaken any semblance of control and has placed their fate entirely in the hands of the film, praying that nothing causes them to burst out in sudden momentary panic.

The brilliance of "Shutter Island" lies in its ability to ratchet up the tension, making it ever-present, yet always building. Within 10 minutes of the film's opening, the hairs on the back of your neck begin to rise, alerting you to an imminent sense of danger. As the film continues, you begin to feel your spine tingle and your legs stiffen, as though you too are trapped in the same way that Teddy is. The island is completely locked off from the rest of the world. Eleven miles of ocean separate it from any other land and there is only one ferry that carries people to-and-fro. An impending storm cuts the phone lines, severing any ties to the main world. Teddy and Chuck are completely alone, and so too is the audience. No one is to be trusted, not even the people we take for granted as our allies. It is best to watch this film on a rainy day, when the rain slaps against your windows and the white bursts of lightning echo the blinding, shocking revelations of the film.

"Shutter Island" is a film based upon the visceral panic inspired by powerlessness. It is a two and a half hour feeling of free-falling, with nothing to hold onto, no grounding truth that provides refuge from the raging storm. The film's ultimate twist questions any semblance of power the audience thought it had, revealing the hidden demons that lie dormant within each of us, and with it comes even more ambiguity and a final quote that will be argued by film viewers everywhere as to the meaning of its implications. So I'll leave you with the very same question the film poses: "What would be worse: to live as a monster or die a good man?"

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THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

STEM or Shakespeare? Your move.

Choosing your major is a big decision. It should be: a lot of money and effort goes into earning your diploma. These days, the professional world places so much emphasis on education that for some, filling out a major declaration form feels like the first step in a job application. As an editorial board, we weren't surprised to come across a recent Washington Post article explaining how — as a direct result of this perceived professional pressure — there's been a big shift in the kinds of majors students declare. Ever since the financial crash in 2008, English and History departments across the country are a lot less crowded. Students in Economics or STEM classrooms, on the other hand, find themselves struggling to find a free seat.

At Middlebury, things are no different. Humanities departments report declines in both major declaration and individual class enrollment over the past several years, while the Comp Sci department seems to grow bigger by the day. Class numbers aside, there's a pervasive belief on campus that an economics or science focuses lead to surer, higher-paying jobs. A lot of the time, STEM subjects are equated with "practical skills," while humanities or languages courses are treated almost like intellectual hobbies. Many students seem to think that the only reason to declare a humanities major is out of pure passion.

As the semester progresses and job and internship searches collide with many sophomores' major decisions, these kinds of course-related anxieties are only intensifying. All over campus, Music or Literary Studies majors can be overheard making the obligatory deprecating jokes about future employment challenges. We wouldn't run off to Forest for an add/drop card quite yet, though.

As it turns out, many of the assumptions we make about the relationship between majors, job prospects and earnings simply aren't true. For instance, the fields of arts and communication formed the largest employer for Midd's class of 2018, while financial services came in second. The Post article further points out how, while graduates with science and technical degrees initially earn higher salaries than say, English majors straight out of college, this pay gap disappears over time. Numerous reports attest to how employers at large banks and tech companies seek humanities and social science majors (although we certainly acknowledge the hiring habits of these jobs do not provide the only metric for occupational success). As often as not, humanities majors, and liberal arts students in general, are championed as "well-rounded" and "highly adaptable."

And so, contrary to Middlebury myth, the kinds of skills which students gain through humanities courses are enormously important in the working world. As an editorial board composed largely of humanities or language majors, we realize we might be a little biased. In our experience, however, the stuff we've learned in class proves incredibly, professionally valuable.

This past summer, for instance, one editorial board member worked as an investigative intern at a public defender's office in D.C. She stresses just how crucial storytelling was in and around the courtroom; Her job involved listening to clients and writing clear, compelling statements. She roots these skills — namely the ability to appreciate and tell stories — in a lot of the classes she's taken at Middlebury, both within and beyond her Political Science major. Even the structure of humanities courses teach professionally valuable skills; Another member of the board reflected on how the ability to write and defend a thesis, or argument — something she gained, in large part, through English Literature essays and seminars — came in handy speechwriting and canvassing for her local political representative.

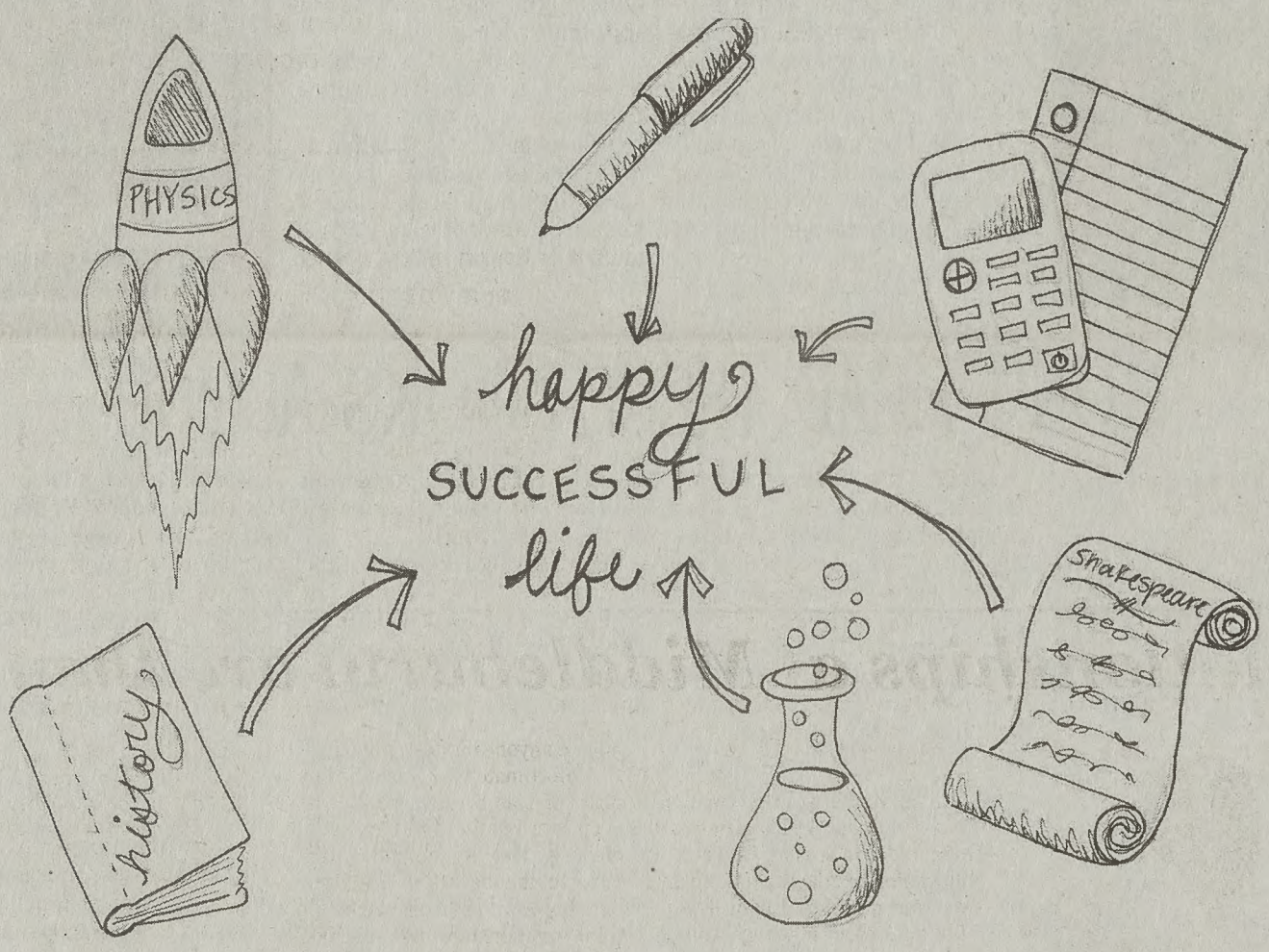
The benefits of humanities majors extend beyond purely professional skills. To that end, many editorial board members pointed out that job prospects aren't the only reason for declaring a major. There are other, equally valid ways to go about compiling your course schedule. One editorial member reflected on how important a role her History major plays in her broader, "personal" education. She explained how the things she learns in class have proved more applicable to her everyday life than she could have ever expected. Another board member explained how she declared her GSFS major because of the profound impression left by a couple of the department's professors. In her experience, creating a close relationship with a department — any department — represents a thoughtful and rewarding way to approach your education.

It's equally important to acknowledge that, for some students, the choice of major isn't really a "choice" at all. Many students entering the workforce face unavoidable financial concerns. For many international students, there are visas to consider (for example, U.S. immigration law means that international college students who choose to major in STEM-related fields are substantially more likely to receive HB-1 visas for two years, rather than one). Some international students may circumvent these kinds of restrictions by choosing to double major or minor in non-STEM fields, but even so, there are certain logistics in place that may limit these students' freedom of academic choice. These stipulations inform the myriad approaches students take when shaping their educational paths. Choosing what to study does not fit a one-size-fits-all model.

In other words, there are as many valid reasons for declaring a major at a school like Midd as there are students. Our goal isn't to pretend that job prospects don't figure significantly in those reasons; we simply want to point out that they aren't the only reason. Not just that, but the majors that tend to increase one's job prospects aren't always the ones you might expect. And so we encourage you not to silence your passions. Instead, embrace them — they might translate to the next chapter of your life much better than you imagine.

editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus editorial board.



On respect and dignity

op-ed

Varsha Vijayakumar '20
is president of the Student Government Association.

I remember exactly what I was wearing: a white, spaghetti-strapped, shirred crop top and my favorite high-waisted blue jeans. Gold hoop earrings. Worn-in Stan Smiths.

It was the evening of graduation. I was exhausted from having been the commencement marshal during the ceremony earlier that morning, from having packed my entire dorm room away in less than two hours. The dining halls were closed, so I made my way to Shafer's to get a sandwich to go.

As I walked out of the store, I noticed two men sitting across from each other at one of the picnic tables outside. I didn't know them personally, but I recognized them as Midd Kids. One of them was looking directly at me and didn't take his eyes off of me. As I turned onto the sidewalk, I heard him ask his friend if he knew who I was. The friend looked at me and then proceeded to tell him that I was the new SGA president.

Immediately, the guy slammed his hands on the table, swerved his head in my direction to take a look at me again and exclaimed dramatically, "That piece is the SGA president?!"

I kept walking. I consider myself to be an outspoken person, someone who doesn't take anyone else's sh*t. But I kept walking, quietly. As if I hadn't heard them.

At parties, some men feel entitled to approach me simply because they "know" who I am. I've overheard someone say, "Imagine if I f*cked the SGA president," and another guy dare his friend to "take the president home." Just the other day, I walked by two men after parking my car in the Ridgeline lot. As soon as they passed me, they began to giggle and one commented, "Did you check out the SGA prez?"

I've only really been in this role for three months, but already these interactions have become the norm. It's terrible already that I have to overhear others sexualizing me. What's worse is that my title itself — SGA President — seems to play a central role in their sexual fantasies.

Let me be frank. I have worked my ass off to earn my peers' respect and assume this role. I prioritize SGA every single g*ddamn day, often at the expense of my academics, sleep, social life and senior year in general. I work constantly to try to make Middlebury a better place for all students.

I did not do all this just to be degraded, to be reduced to nothing more than a powerful woman some guys would get a kick out of "conquering." I did not do all this just to cry in countless counseling sessions about this same exact issue. To be reminded nearly every day that no matter how much I accomplish, I am still primarily perceived as a sex object.

That's not part of the job description.

I refrained from writing about this for the longest time, but it has gotten to a point where I feel unable to confidently do my job. I find myself wondering if some men do what I ask because they agree with me, or because they find me attractive. If my looks on any given day are a more important tool of persuasion than my intellect ever will be. I doubt myself and my abilities on a daily basis even though I know I am more than qualified.

I also know that unfortunately, none of this is unique to me.

It feels like women have to work extra hard just to get a chance at assuming a position of power. But I've come to realize that getting into the room isn't the hard part — staying in that role with legitimacy and respect is.

It's a pattern we need to break.

SARAH FAGAN

Should I use a condom?

sex panther

***Sex Panther** writes on all things sex, love and hookup-related at Middlebury.*

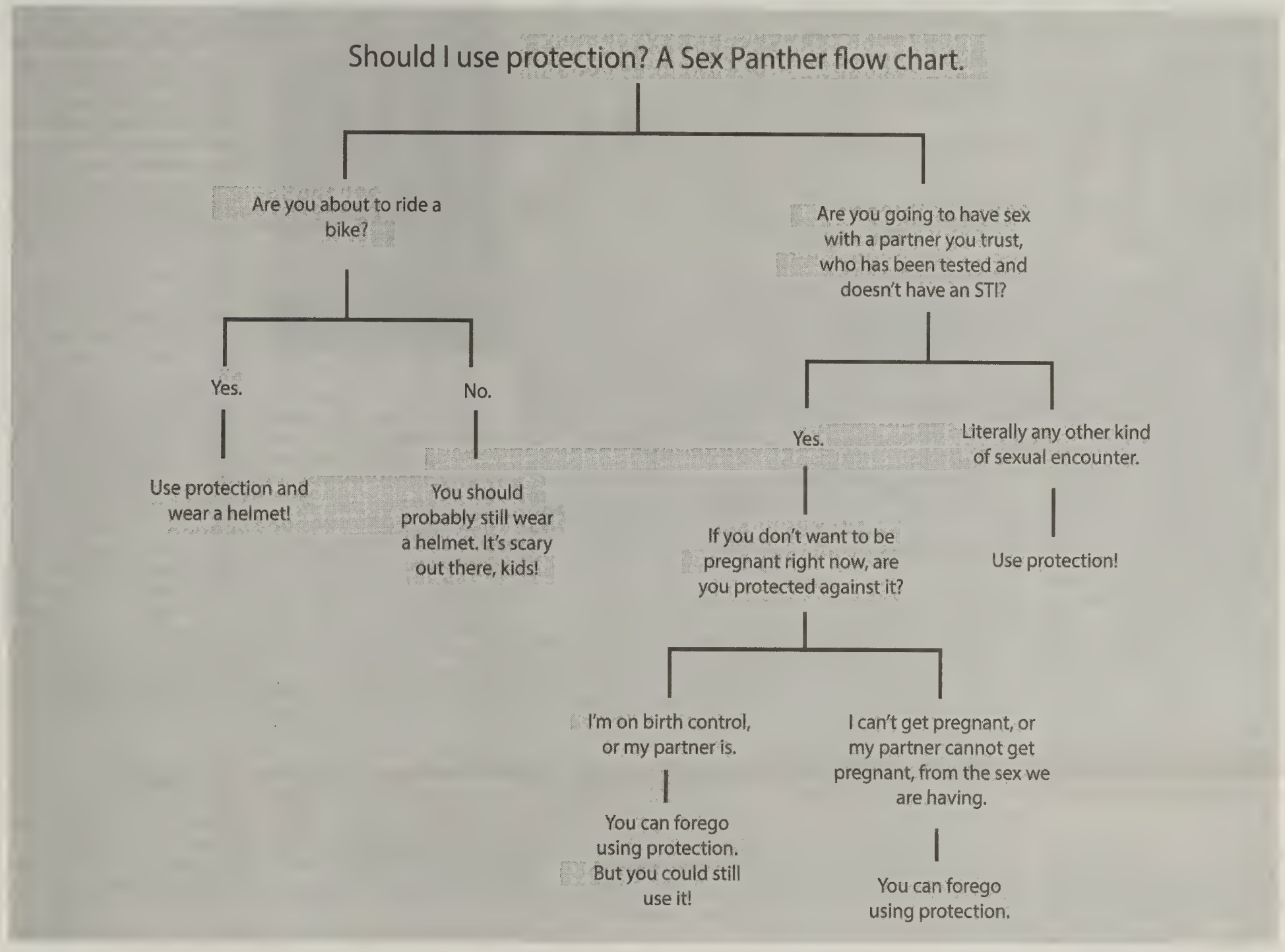
This week's column is the second installment in a multi-part series on STIs.

For part two of my series on sexually transmitted infections (STIs), let's dive into whether you should use protection or not during sexual encounters of the third kind (oo, spooky!). Spoiler alert: you should probably just use protection. The only condition where it is ok to forego using protection to avoid STIs is if you are with a partner you trust completely, who you know has been tested for STIs and does not have any. Your relationship with your partner may be monogamous (oo, monogamy — even spookier!) or your partner may have other partners — just make sure they are using protection with their other partners, or that you know everyone involved is STI-free.

There are a few important things that I've left out of the map below — for instance, if you're going rollerblading, you should wear knee pads for a different kind of protection. On a more serious note, there are lots of different ways that sex happens, and you should make sure you are protected for all of them. For example, using a dental dam or a condom is the only way to protect yourself from getting an STI. If you're planning on any kind of anal penetration, you should use a condom and lube. If you are planning on both vaginal and anal penetration, do not transition between the two willy-nilly. You need to use a new condom if you go from anal to vaginal. Don't go between the two without either removing the condom and putting a new one on, or calling it quits after the "butt stuff".

The bottom line is that pure trust is not only scary, it's also risky. If you have any kind of icky feeling that you should be using protection, then use protection. There's no one size fits all approach to sex and protection (although all condoms are the same size...). When in doubt, just use a gosh-darn condom or dental dam! And, if you want to make protection fun and Halloween-themed this weekend, find someone on SPECS and beg them for a glow-in the-dark condom. Stay tuned next week for part 3 of my series on STIs: how to ask someone to use protection (oooo, asking — spookiest!).

SARAH FAGAN


Should I use protection? A Sex Panther flow chart.
Are you about to ride a bike?
Yes.
Use protection and wear a helmet!
No.
You should probably still wear a helmet. It's scary out there, kids!
Are you going to have sex with a partner you trust, who has been tested and doesn't have an STI?
Yes.
If you don't want to be pregnant right now, are you protected against it?
I'm on birth control, or my partner is.
You can forego using protection. But you could still use it!
I can't get pregnant, or my partner cannot get pregnant, from the sex we are having.
You can forego using protection.
Literally any other kind of sexual encounter.
Use protection!

Relationships at Middlebury: are they built to last?

Ask Tré

***Tré Stephens** answers the Middlebury community's burning questions.*

Dear Tre,
Are relationships sustainable in the Midd environment?
— Anonymous

Dear Reader,

Thank you for your submission. This column may be short due to it being midterm season. However, I still wanted to take the time to answer your question. I may also refer to some of my other columns on preferences, sexuality and labels, because I think they connect to this question.

Before I begin to answer the question, I want to ask readers a different question. Think to yourself, *How many people do I know at Middlebury College who are in a relationship?* Some of you may say everyone is, or some of you may say you only know a few people that are, and some of you may say you know no one in a relationship. I also want you to ask yourself who gets to be in a relationship. Here — I'll give you a hint. If you are a cis, white male or female, then you have the best chances of being in a relationship here on this campus. Is that a bad thing? Not necessarily, but it can make for a very toxic environment where people may not feel good enough to romantically pursue anyone on this campus.

Unfortunately, I come from a place of bias because I have never been in a relationship here at Middlebury. This is something that I hope to change in the near future, but for now, I'm still single. Do I think relationships are sustainable at Midd? Sure! Do I think healthy relationships are sustainable at Midd? Well, maybe. Let me explain.

I think everyone on this campus is capable of being in a relationship. However, we need to ask ourselves why are we in such a rush to be in one. I think it comes from the societal pressures associated with being a young adult. We see how we should live from movies and even from watching the people around us in our everyday lives. We see that we should go to school, get a job, get married — a very traditional view of how things should go. Well, I think that pressure is weighing down on us to try, and push us to be in relationships in an early age.

Once we get into them, we tend to hold ourselves and our relationships to unrealistic standards. Example one: "I need to spend as much time with my partner as I can." No, you don't. You shouldn't have to be in a person's face 24/7 to prove how much you like them. Example two: "I need to get my partner a gift for our three month anniversary." Wrong again. A healthy relationship requires both parties to have an understanding with one another that promotes a safe environment, not one tethered to unrealistic standards.

The problem with Middlebury students who are in relationships is that they have to make it known to everybody around them that they are in love. Again, here we go with those unrealistic expectations. Don't bring your partner to a party and then make out in the middle of the dance floor. Don't sign up for a "friendly mixer" and then come with your partner. Don't spend every moment trying to make your relationship as public as possible. Relationships can't handle that kind of public pressure. They are meant to be between the two parties involved. Here at Middlebury, I see my friends that are in relationships and I see how stressed they are because their bonds are built on unrealistic expectations.

So, again, do I think relationships are sustainable at Middlebury? Of course I do. However, I do think there is a difference between being in a relationship and being in a healthy relationship. There's also a difference between sustaining a healthy relationship, and trying to sustain a healthy relationship at Middlebury. My advice is if you are trying to pursue a relationship with someone, make sure you know what you want, so that you don't base what you want off of others' expectations. I said in the beginning that I come from a place of bias, but I do think that this advice can apply to a multitude of people. So if you know someone who is struggling with this, have them read my column.

Love,
Tre Stephens

Have opinions of your own you want to share? Send your op-eds, pitches or ideas along to eeberlee@middlebury.edu!

MIKHAIL! That was the greatest essay I have ever read! Here's your cap and gown! You graduate tomorrow!
HOORAY MIKHAIL!!!
ALSO, there are some delegates from the UN waiting outside with a very LUCRATIVE job offer!
Hm... I suppose I have time.
Hey dimwad! If you're just going to sleep, why don't you give the desk to someone who has work to do?!
Zzzz
M?!
DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO?! I WORK FOR THE UN! I CAN HAVE YOU SANCTIONED!!!
THIN ICE, by ARTHUR FURNISS

Reel Critic: "Clemency"

By NINA NG
Contributing Writer

The movie "Clemency" opens without mercy. An execution scene lays bare the somber, cold world of a prison.

Directed by Chinonye Chukwu, "Clemency," the Hirschfield Film screened on Saturday, Oct. 26, follows Bernadine Williams (Alfre Woodard), a prison warden caught between worlds as two executions invade her personal life, revealing the unstable foundations on which she has built her stoic façade.

As the film moves inside, viewers see a contemplative side of Bernadine as she watches the empty straitjacket in thought but makes nothing more of it when she later observes the man strapped in. Standing closely by the seat, she gazes on as he is violently subdued. The man convulses, thrashing in pain as she shows little emotion, cloaked in shades of blue under stark lighting. Here, within the detachment between the warden and the executed, we see the true countenance she tries to bear.

COURTESY PHOTO/NEON

What makes "Clemency" particularly insightful is Chukwu's framing of narrative duality. This duality is encompassed by both Bernadine and Anthony Woods (Aldis Hodge), a central character on death row for an armed robbery gone wrong. From the get-go, we're supposed to side with Anthony. Lawyer Lumetta (Richard Schiff) is sympathetic but believes he's fighting for a lost cause, while Anthony is still hopeful, believing he may have a fighting chance with Lumetta by his side. But Bernadine remains immovable, almost apathetic, even when she persists against Lumetta's pleas, signifying that her stance is concrete on not granting clemency to Anthony.

> *"'Clemency' is well-constructed and feels real — frankly, all too real. Chukwu seizes every chance to highlight the emotional rollercoasters characters ride."*

Things turn sour when Bernadine goes home to her husband, Jonathan (Wendell Pierce). She watches the news, looking at Anthony's case in the comfort and softness of her own home. Curled up on the couch, Woodard embodies a different side to Bernadine: a troubled insomniac, a hyperventilating wife bedridden with nightmares of work. Recurrent dreams mirroring her underlying empathy for Anthony touch the hearts of the audience, and solidify the case for clemency despite of Bernadine's loyalty to stoicism. The film hits its stride here when Bernadine battles with trouble from all sides: from her work, in the bar and on her anniversary. Despite her internalized conflict, Jonathan says he's had enough of this "shell of a wife!"

But what about Anthony Woods? All this time, we see him meandering the confined walls of the prison, hands cuffed as he is boxed inside. Aldis Hodge crafts a beautiful performance, eyes wild and contemplative as he gazes at the drawings of birds on his cell wall, clustered in papers of yellow and soft white. Vulnerable and afraid, Woods descends into desperation, doing anything to release his anguish within his suffocated, lonesome state. We grapple with the ultimate question of whether clemency will be granted throughout the duration of the film, as varying sides to the debate are revealed, and protesters, family and overall visages of hope crowd the scene.

In engaging with intimate moments of central characters dealing with their own thoughts, Chukwu also collaborates with cinematographer Eric Branco particularly well. Warm yellows, harsh blues and stark whites are interspersed to create visions of conflict behind the minds of viewers and characters alike. This stylistic choice evokes multiple sides of characters' sympathies and creates a languid stream of contemplation. Looking at the film from a technical standpoint, "Clemency" is well-constructed and feels real — frankly, all too real. Chukwu seizes every chance to highlight the emotional rollercoasters characters ride. It could take as little as the noise of an electrocardiograph to the verbose interactions of family members to draw out your frustrations.

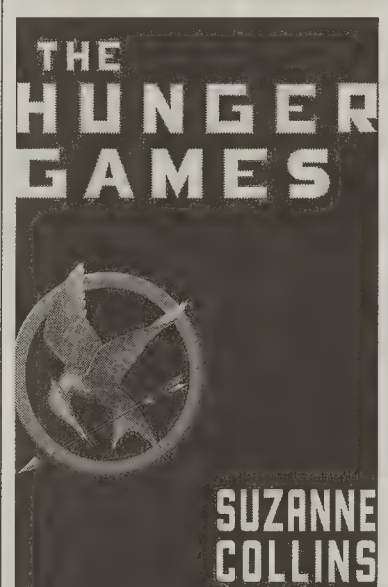
Although the film progresses slowly, "Clemency" pulls us in with its reflection. It might not be a film you can view casually, but there's value in asking ourselves whether it's possible to seal off internal conflicts of ethics and morality. Ultimately, Chukwu brings dimension to the coldness of execution and the executioners. With this narrative, we push to reflect on freedoms, dualities of others' lives and the caging narratives with which we imprison ourselves.

The Librarian Is In

By KATRINA SPENCER

Guest Columnist Katrina Spencer is a Literature and Cultures Librarian in the Davis Family Library.

"The Hunger Games" Suzanne Collins, 2008



COURTESY PHOTO/SCHOLASTIC

Okay, okay. I know I am literally 10 years+ behind the world in recognizing that this series is cool. A white, bow-and-arrow-wielding heroine in a fantasy region didn't exactly "resonate" with me in 2008 or when the cinematic adaptations of this work made it to the big screen. But, in an effort to get to know how to use go/overdrive/ and our audiobook platform, I downloaded "The Hunger Games" and got to know its central character, Katniss Everdeen.

So, for those of you who might have missed it, "The Hunger Games" is a three-part book series that tells of a fictional, dystopian society, Panem, in which the powers that be exercise control by forcing 12 districts to offer up their children to compete against one another to the death in deadly, outdoor arenas. In theory, 12 enter into the arena and one exits alive and victorious. When protagonist Katniss' beloved little sister, Primrose, is selected to compete, Katniss volunteers to take her place, believing her sister would never survive. The tale, then, over the course of three books, is of Katniss' harrowing survival as she battles for her life navigating relationships, dangerous terrain and the precarious whims of the people who play with her fate.

Truth be told, I likely would not have ever picked this book up on my own. I mostly deal in memoirs, have a penchant for graphic novels and choose works with a social justice slant. However, as a librarian, I needed to be able to teach others how to use Overdrive, so I played with the technology until I got it right. It was a bonus that the audiobook format gave me an exciting narrative that I could listen to while performing mundane tasks like stretching at the gym or chopping vegetables in the kitchen. And if ever I was unexpectedly interrupted, Overdrive allowed me to rewind in 15-second increments to recuperate my place. This was the first audiobook I've listened to on this platform and it's been well worth the adventure.

If I have one critique, I think Collins relies too heavily on making Katniss' self-doubt a factor of appeal. It seems to suggest, regretfully, that confidence is not an attractive quality in women. Katniss is always questioning herself, her actions, her choices and her plans and this shakiness of thought is supposed to make readers like her. It's not enough that she is a sharp hunter, a reliable provider or that her male counterparts are hopelessly in love with her. She has to be unaware of her beauty and skill to be "worthy." Katniss is self-sacrificing, passionate and vulnerable, too. But, for me, the excessive insecurity surrounding her competence is not endearing. Women can be confident, effective, self-knowing and attractive all at once.

Other works in our collection that may feel similar include the "Harry Potter" series (found also in some foreign languages) and "A Handmaid's Tale" which is also dystopian and centers women.

The economics of reproductive rights

By EDYTH MOLDOW
Contributing Writer

The reproductive rights of women have been a source of controversy for decades, eliciting a tug-of-war between opinions on what women should do in the face of unplanned parenthood. Contemporary public discourse often overlooks quantitative analysis of this particular issue.

Caitlin Myers has been a professor of economics at Middlebury since 2005, teaching numerous courses within the department and conducting her own research on topics that capture her interest. The most notable of these research endeavors is her focus on the causal effects of reproductive policies and access to reproductive healthcare on the lives of women. Myers says she "applies an economic lens to this important issue by bridging an intersection between social questions and statistical methods through application of the scientific method to testable questions."

Myers grew up on the Georgia-Alabama border, in an area that was once a center of textile manufacturing. Surrounded by segregated facilities, she attended a public high school that was predominantly black.

"I was living in the middle of this community as a relatively privileged person racially, which evoked a shock to my system upon entering into college life," she said. "Attending college at Tulane University changed my perspective of where I came from."

For her, this change in social context needed to be "made sense of and placed in a broader context." Economics was a powerful tool to understand issues of inequality, she said. This "tool," combined with her natural curiosity, sparked her interest in researching the powerful social issues she was surrounded by as a child — including that of the legalization of abortion and its implications.

COURTESY PHOTO

Professor Myers' research on access to reproductive health care has been featured in prominent publications such as the New York Times UpShot.

So what kind of research does Myers do, exactly?

"I use natural experiments where I compare outcomes from naturally occurring treatment and control groups," she said. Quantitatively studying reproductive rights requires investigating human subjects. With this, there exist certain ethical principles to conduct experiments, such as ensuring participants give informed consent and protecting participants from undue stress and harm.

Additionally, randomly assigning subjects to control or treatment groups is often not possible when studying people. Myers refers to this quantitative technique as "infeasible or unethical" for the kind of research she does. Instead, she uses other statistical methods, like natural experiments, that are more ethical and do not require randomization.

Myers' research has caught the eye of many well-known journals and newspapers, including the New York Times UpShot. This summer, UpShot covered her investigation about what would happen if Roe v. Wade were to be overturned. In 1973, the Supreme Court ruled that women would have the freedom to choose to have an abortion without government interference. So, if Roe v. Wade were overturned, many abortion clinics would be forced to close. After pinpointing the location of every abortion facility in the U.S., Myers discovered that women in the Southern and Midwestern regions of the United States would have to travel greater distances to reach a provider.

Myers found that 100,000 women would have difficulty reaching an abortion clinic in just a year proceeding an overturning of Roe v. Wade. "This demonstrates a causal effect of regulating abortion on access to reproductive care, which is an insurmountable burden for women in regards to reproductive rights," Myers said.

When asked why her research is increasingly important in the changing social times, she said, "In a nutshell, my research measures the burdens on women while feeding in to evidence-based policy making."

Oftentimes, students see the field of economics in a limited way — as simply a path to Wall Street, for example. Myers, however, believes that "answering thorny social questions requires a variety of approaches and economics provides students with a diverse and powerful toolbox to do so." She, and others in her field, aim to contribute to our understanding of the reproductive rights of women, helping to raise awareness of its importance and applications in our rapidly changing world.

StrongHER Girls raises the bar

COURTESY PHOTO/LEX SCOTT

According to her website, Nakhlawi takes "an empirical approach to strength training" and draws on her background as a science student.

By SOPHIE HILAND
Contributing Writer

One of the only places on campus I've felt my gender is in the weightroom.

It's not just that I'm overwhelmed by the omnipresent groups of five or six male athletes from any given sports team who always seem to be lifting at the exact same time as me, that I don't feel confident in my lifting form. Nor is it that I am often one of the only women in the gym. It's the fact that all of this reminds me that I don't have a support system in the form of teammates or coaching staff, anybody to spot my form and remind me that the weights I am lifting are often half the size of those others are using.

Gyms should be where you go to feel stronger and more confident. Instead, when I am in the gym on my own, I end up feeling weaker and more insecure.

Salma Nakhlawi '19 is working to help women feel confident, strong and empowered both in and out of the weightroom as a coach and personal trainer.

Nakhlawi fills every role at StrongHER Girls™, from founder and business manager to coach and head of social media. Her days are full, but the majority of her work days are spent coaching. StrongHER Girls describes itself as a "movement dedicated to teaching girls, womxn, and folx of marginalized identities how to empower themselves to be strong, from the inside-out." Most of the training Nakhlawi does is remote, which means that she spends a significant amount of time on daily FaceTime calls or texts with her clients to whom she provides 24/7 support. While a majority of her clients identify as women, she also works with a handful of male or gender non-conforming clients.

When discussing her own start to powerlifting, Nakhlawi is quite open, sharing that powerlifting was introduced to her during a time when her life was very dark and unhealthy. A stressed out student during her first year of college, she found herself losing the structure she had previously found in physical activity throughout her childhood and had settled into a routine that relied on food to relieve stress instead of providing nourishment and enjoyment.

"Training should be fun," Nakhlawi said, "and it's my goal to help women and gender non-conforming people enjoy their time in the gym and help them achieve their goals. My goal is to help clients work towards a life that is happy, healthy and injury free through weight training."

Unlike the cardio section of the gym which she found boring and tedious, Nakhlawi began to enjoy her time in the weight room where it wasn't about how much an individual weighed, but about how well and how much they could lift.

Nakhlawi continued to work on her powerlifting skills as she made the transition from the first college she attended to Middlebury for her second year.

During her time at Middlebury, Nakhlawi continued to expand her knowledge of powerlifting and the importance of wellness. As a member of the women's rugby team, she found herself leading team lifts and teaching a lot of the women on the team about the basics of lifting. While a rugby-related injury sidelined her for months, she was cleared to return to the weight room at the end of her healing process.

No longer able to play rugby, Nakhlawi looked for a similarly supportive community of women to lift with, but couldn't find any. She returned to the weightroom and began to make conversation with other women who were lifting at similar times as she was. She wound up asking fellow female-lifters if they could spot her on a lift, then returned the favor when they needed a spotter.

Encouraged by relationships she built with other women she met in the weightroom, Nakhlawi started to teach lifting classes at the college, encouraging women to give lifting a shot with a group that created an environment less intimidating than the everyday weight room.

Nakhlawi also took many courses within the Middlebury Dance Department, which introduced her to mindful meditation, something she practices daily and recommends to her clients to include in their routines.

"Life is always going to be stressful. Things are always going to come up," Nakhlawi explains, but mindful meditation, she has noticed, can play a huge role in helping clients get the most out of their hard work in the gym both physically and emotionally. Visualizing a lift before walking into the gym, for example, helps boost confidence and therefore move through a room where they may be the only woman with intention and determination.

Nakhlawi's goal is to support her clients on their journeys as they "take a couple hours a week for yourself to feed your body in a way that's going to help develop your training."

While planning her next steps post-graduation, Nakhlawi realized that her previous interest in consulting would not provide her with the balanced lifestyle she had worked so hard to build or the fulfillment she felt after sharing her passion for lifting with other women.

As a neuroscience major, Nakhlawi had learned about anatomy, kinesthesiology, nutrition and the systems of the human body in many of her courses at the college. At MiddCORE, she learned about the big picture concepts of entrepreneurship, and at the Tuck Bridge Program at Dartmouth College, she learned about the nitty gritty details of running a business. To take on clients, however, she still needed to add to her coaching knowledge.

Nakhlawi got in touch with successful powerlifting coaches and asked them to share their knowledge and expertise with her by mentoring her. She read books, attended conferences and took in all the information she could.

"It wasn't easy to make the choice to go into an untraditional business, but I took the leap of faith," Nakhlawi said. "I am very fortunate to have an amazing support system behind me who have encouraged me every step of the way."

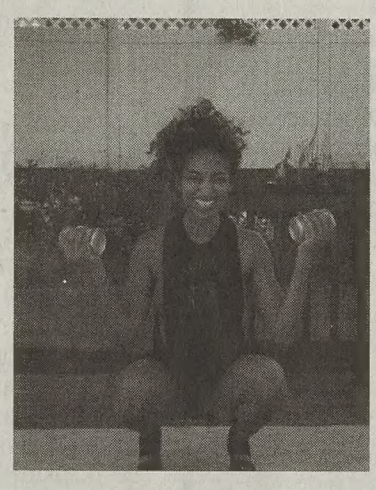
While Nakhlawi may not be working in BiHall labs any more, she still faces many of her challenges as a coach with a scientific and data-driven approach.

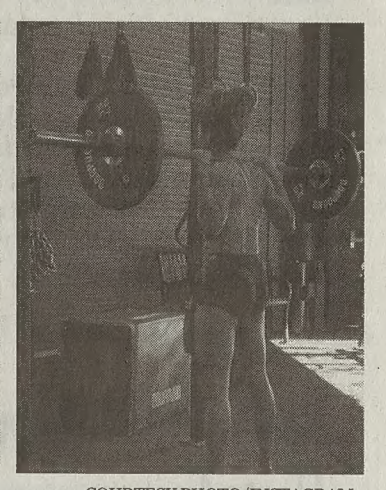
"When it comes to powerlifting and the progress clients are making week by week and session by session, there's a huge amount of data that can be collected and then analyzed," she said. Instead of falling victim to the temptation to give up when progress plateaus, Nakhlawi sees this as an opportunity to reevaluate training plans, often transitioning clients from beginner programs to intermediate ones. This process, she explains, isn't unlike reevaluating a hypothesis after the first couple of rounds of experimentation.

This isn't the only part of StrongHER that is informed by scientific reasoning.

"Weight training helps fight osteoporosis by building stronger bones, it releases endorphins or 'happy hormones' and it boosts self confidence and positive body image," Nakhlawi said. "Oh, and the next time you're on a plane, you probably won't need to ask someone to help you put your suitcase in the overhead bin."

Check out StrongHER Girls™ for some great workout inspiration, empowering words and a pretty enthusiastic and supportive comment section.





COURTESY PHOTO/INSTAGRAM

Testimonials on the StrongHER Girls website praise Nakhlawi's mental and physical strength.

DON'T MISS THIS

TEDxMiddlebury 2019: Gaining the Edge

This year's theme, "Gaining the Edge," is about the continual drive and desire to transcend, to preserve and expand, to beautify and to expose the bars of reality between which we live.

Saturday 11/2, 10 a.m., Mahaney Arts Center, Olin C. Robison Concert Hall

Hirschfield International Film Series: "Portrait of a Lady on Fire"

Marianne, a painter, is commissioned to do the wedding portrait of Héloïse, a young woman who has just left the convent. Héloïse is a reluctant bride to be and Marianne must paint her without her knowing. She observes her by day to paint her secretly. In French with English subtitles.

Saturday 11/2, 3 & 8 p.m. Dana Auditorium

How a news anchor became the news: A conversation with bilingual international journalist, Vanessa Ruiz

In 2015, Vanessa Ruiz received widespread criticism and national attention for pronouncing words from Spanish with a Spanish accent during English broadcasts. In this talk, she will detail her experiences of standing up to the racism she faced and moving forward.

Monday 11/4, 4:15 p.m., Robert A. Jones '59 Conference Room

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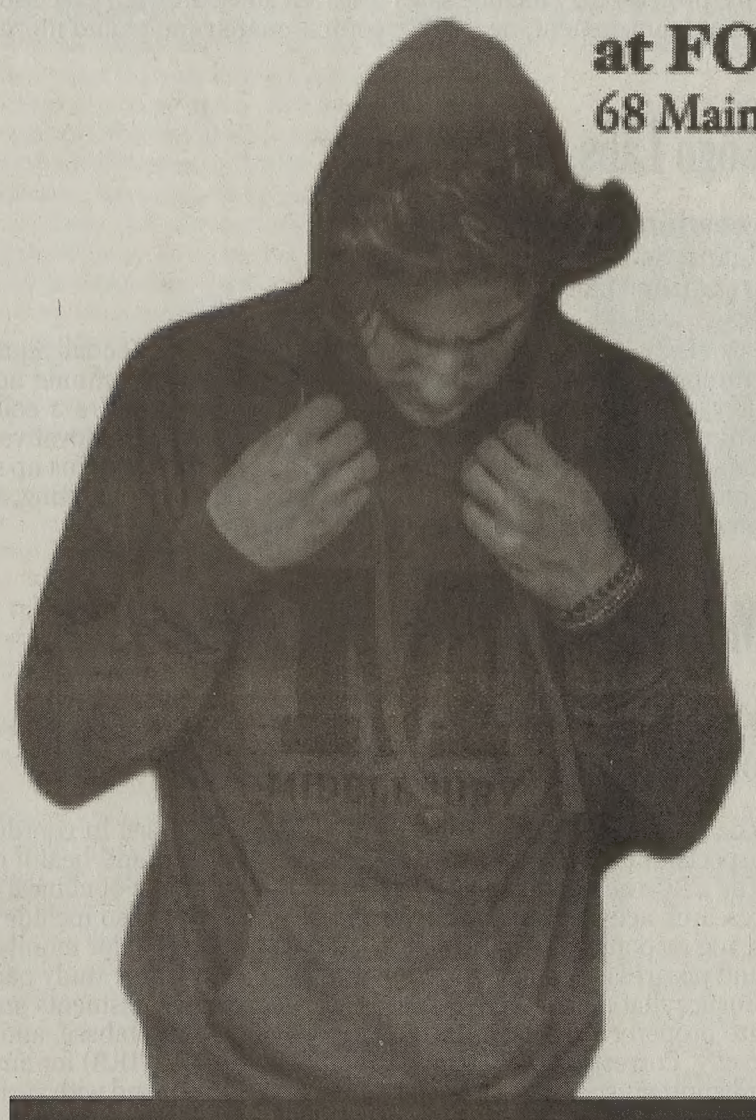

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• Kids/Infant
• Gear
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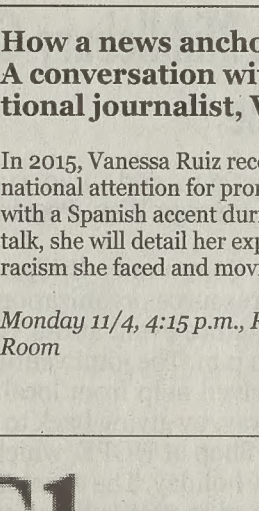

www.MiddleburyShop.com

Center for Community Engagement

Help with an Afterschool Program Focused on Community Social Change

Deadline: Thursday, Oct. 31

Are you interested in helping with an afterschool program focused on community social change? The Bristol Elementary School's Expanded Learning Program's (ELP) director is offering a social impact course for the elementary students starting at the end of November as part of their afterschool enrichment program. Students in the class would survey their classmates and try to come up with a community problem that they could work on. Middlebury students can help the elementary school students identify these community problems and facilitate discussions to try to work toward solutions. Given the poverty rate in Bristol, this would also be an amazing mentorship opportunity for the elementary students to get to know some Middlebury students. The afterschool classes are usually offered from 3:00-5:00 p.m. at Bristol Elementary School, with a snack and some fun movement activities from 3:00-3:30. There are teachers present for support. The classes can only be one day a week, or more if the students are able to go to Bristol more than once a week. Scheduling is flexible so students should talk through their availability with Kristi Bedard. The next session starts November 11th and runs for eight weeks, but Kristi would need to talk to interested students by Oct. 31 to have time to put together a class description and teacher bio for registration. If interested in this opportunity or if you have any questions, please contact Kristi Bedard at kristi.bedard@mausd.org.

Attend the Green Dot Bystander Training

Date: Friday, Nov. 1, 3:15-9:30 p.m.
Location: Redfield Proctor

The Green Dot Violence Prevention Strategy is a national program that trains students, faculty and staff in bystander intervention to help prevent instances of power-based personal violence (PBPV). Green Dot is hosting a Bystander Intervention Training. The training will equip students with essential tools to intervene in situations of power-based personal violence and help make Middlebury a safer community. Students can sign up at go/greendottraining.

Apply for Middlebury Entrepreneurs JTerm Course

Deadline: Friday, Nov. 1, 11:59 p.m.

The Innovation Hub is now accepting applications for its J-Term course Middlebury Entrepreneurs. This is a visiting instructor-led winter term course taught by the team at the Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies (VCET). The goal of the class is to provide student entrepreneurs with the tools and knowledge necessary for developing their ideas for a new business, tech company or social organization into a full-fledged startup. Apply now at go/MiddE20. Email Meron Benti '19 at mbenti@middlebury.edu if you have any questions in the meantime.

Help Organize a Middlebury Community Halloween Dance

Date: Friday, Nov. 1, 5-7 p.m. and 10:30-11:30 p.m.
Location: Veterans of Foreign Wars Post in 530 Exchange St

For Halloween, CSAC, Community Bridges, the Turning Point Center, and other community resource organizations will be hosting a fun, family-friendly Halloween dance event at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post (VFW) from 7:00-11:00 p.m. The joint venture is a way to help bring folks who have perhaps received help from local services out into their communities in a positive way, by giving back to others in need. Proceeds will go toward the Holiday Shop at HOPE, which serves area families to help give every child a happy holiday. The event needs help getting set up from about 5:00-7:00 p.m. and in particular afterward from 10:30-11:30 p.m. to help clean up and ready the VFW for their own event the following morning. If you have any questions, please contact Kate Selby at kselby@hope-vt.org or call (802) 388-3608 ext 226.

Present Your Research on Capital Hill

Deadline: Nov. 5, 11:59 p.m.

Apply for a unique opportunity to present your research at the Council on Undergraduate Research's (CUR) Posters on the Hill event. Each year, a select group of students are chosen to represent undergraduate research on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. This event provides students and faculty mentors with a chance to meet with their congressional representatives, showcase their research, and learn about advocacy from Washington Partners. Applications are now open and will be accepted through Nov. 5. For more information, visit CUR's Posters on the Hill. The event date is TBD until the congressional calendar is confirmed but it usually occurs in mid to late April. Advisors normally attend with the presenter. If a poster is accepted, the student and advisor can submit travel budgets to Undergraduate Research for funding assistance. For more information, contact Undergraduate Research Office at uro@middlebury.edu.

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Center for Careers and Internships

See these opportunities and more at go/handshake.

HarperCollins Publishers

Location: New York, N.Y.
Date: Jan. 7
Deadline: Nov. 1

They are now accepting applications for the third annual New to Publishing Information Session and Networking Event. Attendees will have the opportunity to visit the headquarters of HarperCollins in NYC, network with current employees (including hires from our previous New to Publishing events!), and get tips on resumes, cover letters, and the interview process. The New to Publishing events are perfect for anyone without industry experience that is interested in an entry-level role in book publishing.

Sports Mentoring Program Coordinator at Stride Foundation

Location: Middlebury, Vt.
Term: Winter
Deadline: Nov. 1

Stride's Winter Term Sports Mentoring Program Coordinator makes the mentoring magic happen that builds self-esteem, confidence and camaraderie in girls from elementary school to high school. Coordinator is responsible for successful operation of mentoring programs that pair Middlebury College student athletes with local students from Mary Hogan elementary school, Ripton elementary school, Middlebury Union Middle School and St. Michael's College student athletes with Winooski Middle School. Programs are Sisters in Sport in basketball with middle school girls and Snow Stars in skiing with elementary through high school girls.

CrowdStrike

Location: Arlington, Va.
Term: Summer
Deadline: Nov. 1

The Intelligence Team is seeking an Open Source Intelligence Analyst Intern to support our Open Source intelligence mission. This internship serves as an important role in researching cyber security events, conducting analysis, and developing finished intelligence reporting. Your responsibilities will include: conduct and evaluate open source research on various pre-determined cyber security topics supporting CrowdStrike customers, conduct analysis of gathered intelligence, compose written intelligence assessments related to cyber security threats with guidance and prompt turnaround.

Addison Independent

Location: Middlebury, Vt.
Term: Winter
Deadline: Nov. 1

Gain journalism experience this Winter Term as a News Reporter with the Addison Independent! If you're committed to good news reporting and making a positive impact on your community, join our team at Addison Press Inc., to cover the Brandon-Pittsford-Proctor and southern Addison County communities. Interns will write 1-2 stories per week. You'll be working with an award-winning team of 25 out of our Middlebury office. Journalism, photography and basic social media skills preferred.

Exubrancy

Location: New York, N.Y.
Term: Winter
Deadline: Nov. 6

Exubrancy is a national wellness company that designs and manages on-site fitness, meditation and chair massage programs for offices. As a Business Development Intern you will collaborate with Exubrancy's leadership team, currently comprised of a small group of entrepreneurial professionals with work experience at some of the world's leading companies (including Red Bull, Coach Inc., Yelp, and McKinsey & Co.). Specific projects may include sales research and campaign execution, on-site event management, newsletter content management and more.

Cogo Labs

Location: Cambridge, Mass.
Term: Summer
Deadline: Jan. 1

Cogo Labs, an incubator and start-up accelerator in Kendall Square, needs entrepreneurial & outgoing Data Analyst Interns for Summer 2020 – and they're actively looking to bring on Midd Kids! They're a collaborative team of engineers, analysts, and entrepreneurs using innovative tools, big data, and intellectual curiosity to build a platform that spins up successful online businesses, fast. If you like startups, big data, marketing, and entrepreneurship, then Cogo is the place for you!

Massachusetts General Hospital

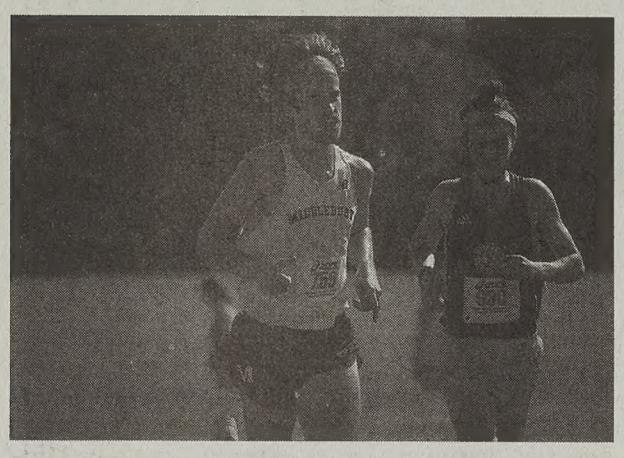
Location: Boston, Mass.
Term: Job
Deadline: Mar. 31, but apply now to maximize chances

The Clinical Research Coordinators (CRC) will assist in coordinating all aspects of a study related to diagnosis, treatment, and health outcomes. The CRC will support and/or conduct the full range of clinical and basic research activities within the program, which may also include neuroimaging responsibilities. The CRC would be responsible for monitoring pace and progress of the study. Serve as a main contact for study participants. Ensure that all components of the participants' assessments and surveys are properly completed, tracked in the computer database, and filed correctly. Correspond with the Internal Review Board (IRB) for any protocol amendments and yearly reports as needed. Correspond with various external regulatory bodies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for yearly non-competing renewal for budget and protocol purposes.

SPORTS RECAPS

CROSS COUNTRY

By JORDAN HOWELL
Sports Writer



BENJY RENTON / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Before having this past weekend to rest, the Middlebury cross country teams competed in the Connecticut College Invitational on Saturday, Oct. 19. The women finished in sixth place, while the men took fifth place.

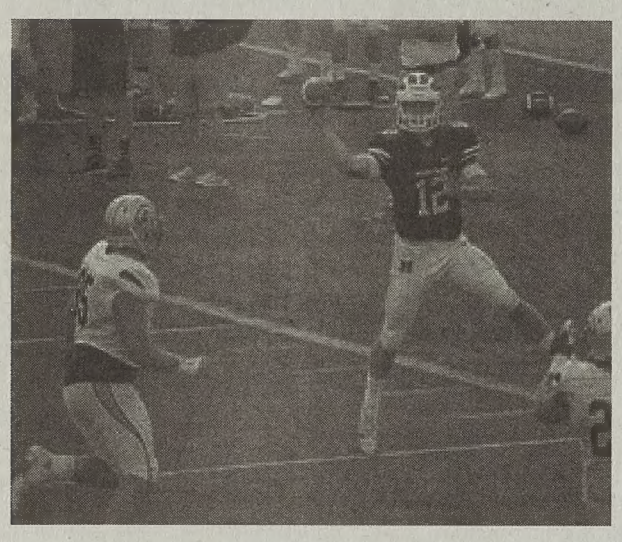
The top finisher for the women was **Cassie Kearney '22** as she captured ninth place with a time of 21:41.7. Next up for the Panthers was **Talia Ruxin '20** whose time of 22:09.2 got her 22nd place. Next for the Panthers was **Meg Wilson '20,** who came in 29th place with a time of 22:18.9.

For the men, **Theo Henderson '20** had a time of 24:50.0 which netted him seventh place. **Henry Fleming '20** was able to finish in 29th place as he ended with a time of 25:21.5. Another important finisher was **Quin McGaugh '22**; a time of 25:40.8 got him 51st place.

Up next for the Panthers are the championship meets. These start with the NESCAC Championships on Saturday, Nov. 2.

FOOTBALL

By LAUREN BOYD
Sports Writer



BENJY RENTON / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Head Coach Bob Ritter earned his 100th career win this past Saturday as the Middlebury Panthers extended their undefeated run, beating Bowdoin 47-29 and improving their record to 7-0. Ritter had also recorded his first win at the same stadium against the Polar Bears in September 2001.

Middlebury dominated for most of the contest, starting off the game with a 21-0 run in the first quarter. Ritter's 100th win began with a 45-yard touchdown run from **Alex Maldjian '23** to open the scoring for the game. QB **Will Jernigan '21** quickly followed with his own rushing touchdown from 23 yards out, after the Polar Bears went three and out on their response. With less than a minute left in the first quarter, Jernigan connected with **Maxim Bochman '20** for a 21-0 lead.

While Bowdoin was only able to put one touchdown on the board before half, the Panthers responded with another 7 points of their own, making the halftime score 28-7. By the end of the third quarter, the Panthers tagged on another unanswered 13 points.

The Polar Bears found their groove at the end of the game, but could not put enough points to catch the Panthers. They decreased their deficit by 22 points, and by the end of the contest, the Panthers took home the victory, 47-29.

Next weekend, Middlebury will play the Hamilton Continentals (4-3), who most recently defeated the Tufts Jumbos (3-4), Middlebury's last competition for the season.

Looking forward, offensive lineman **Kevin Woodring '20** says the team is focusing on improving the little things, in order to see big results at the end of the season.

"I said this back at the beginning of the season, but the main focus, still, is that we have to be able to do the little things right. It may sound simple, yet it makes or breaks a game. We're not a team to blow our opponent off the field; we're a gritty, mentally tough and hard working team that grinds out wins," Woodring said, "In order to keep going 1-0, we have to continue to do the little things right. Right now, Hamilton is the best team on our schedule and we have to do everything we can this week to be extremely well-prepared so that we come out and play a great game on Saturday."

WOMEN'S SOCCER

By HEATHER BOEHM
Sports Editor

BENJY RENTON/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Women's soccer wrapped up their regular season with strong NESCAC play against Tufts on Saturday, Oct. 26 and Williams on Tuesday, Oct. 29. The Panthers triumphed on the road against the Jumbos, sneaking the only goal in within the last few breaths of the contest. The women were able to hold off the Ephs 0-0 in a physical national championship rematch.

Despite 10th-ranked Tufts' home field advantage, Middlebury held its own. The women had their share of opportunities, finding six shots on goal to the Jumbo's five.

The defense protected the net, with goalie **Ursula Alwang '20** refusing to give the hosts any hope. With just under two and a half minutes of play, it was captain **Jinx Charman '20** who led her team to victory, nailing a shot past the Tufts goalie off a free kick from **Ellie Bavier '22**.

After a hard-fought game, the Panthers quickly regrouped for Tuesday's hyped rematch. The women played a brutally physical game that ultimately ended in silence.

"It was a very successful season and we are really excited to build on our success," Charman said. "We are pumped to get another opportunity to face the same teams we have been competing against in the postseason."

This nearly perfect regular season play will give the Panthers the second seed in the conference tournament next weekend. Middlebury missed the top seed by half a point to Tufts.

Charman discussed the team's mantra and mindset going into the postseason. "Our motto is to go '1-0' every game, so that we can focus on each game no matter who we are playing," she said. "We do this so we don't overlook any opponent or get too far ahead of ourselves."

MEN'S TENNIS

By JACK KAGAN
Sports Editor

BENJY RENTON / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

After making an impressive run to the finals in the International Tennis Association (ITA) New England regional tournament, Panther **Stanley Morris '22** punched a ticket to the ITA Cup that took place from Thursday, Oct. 17–19 at the Rome Tennis Center in Rome, Ga. The draw was packed with the regional finalists and champions hailing from top schools like Case Western Reserve, Claremont-Mudd-Scripps (CMS), Emory College and Kenyon College.

Morris, unseeded, shined once again, breaking through to the finals after notching wins against four-star recruit first-year James Hopper of Case Western Reserve and former five-star Jack Katzman of CMS, who was seeded third in the contest.

The final saw Morris up against familiar NESCAC competition: Boris Sorkin, Tufts' standout junior from Russia who has been causing trouble for the Panthers ever since his arrival in Medford in 2017. Sorkin finished last spring ranked ninth in all of Division III tennis, just two behind former Panthers star **Lubomir Cuba '19.** Last spring, no other Panthers cracked the top 50 on this list.

Morris came up just short in the final, taking the fourth-seeded Sorkin to a third set. A tight loss in the first set tiebreak led to some momentum as Morris notched a second set win before falling in the third. Morris and the Panthers have to be proud of such a run, which should bode well for the spring and the future of Middlebury tennis.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

By MIGUEL ESPINOSA
Senior Sports Editor

MICHAEL BORENSTEIN / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Women's tennis concluded the Fall portion of their season by hosting the Middlebury Invitational on Oct. 18-20. The invitational featured Amherst, Brandeis and Williams and took place at the outdoor and indoor tennis courts. The invitational didn't crown a champion since the format involved teams playing each other in either singles or doubles.

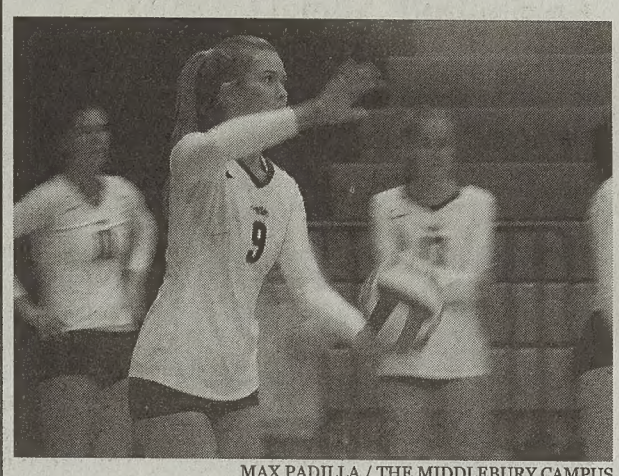
On Friday, all Panther pairs won their doubles matches against Williams. **Katherine Hughes '20** and **Skylar Schossberger '20** sealed victory with an 8-6 set, **Catherine Blayze '20** and **Brinlea La Barge '23** won 8-6, and **Maddi Stow '20** and **Amanda Frank '23** notched a win, scoring 8-4.

Saturday also proved to be a successful day. Against Brandeis, La Barge and Blayze captured a victory at 8-2 and **Ruhi Kamdar '22** and **Caitlin Neal '23** won 8-7. Hughes, La Barge, Schossberger and Frank each tallied wins in singles matches against Williams.

Finally, on Sunday, Stow and **Heather Boehm '20** grabbed an 8-2 doubles victory against Amherst. The Panthers also won all five of their singles against Brandeis.

VOLLEYBALL

By HEATHER BOEHM
Sports Editor



MAX PADILLA / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

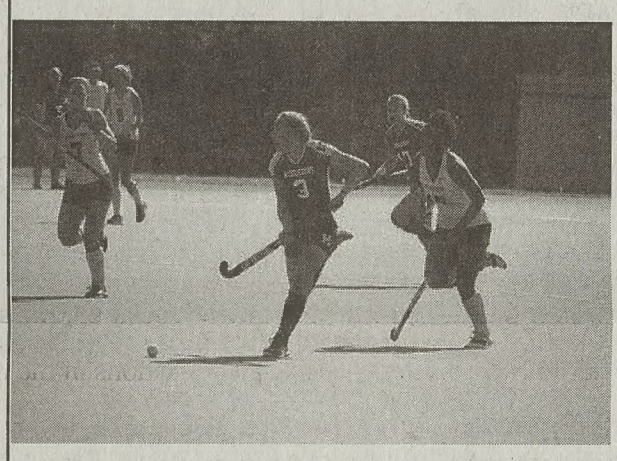
This past weekend women's volleyball fought a tough battle for their seniors at home, but ultimately the women came up just short in their efforts, falling 3–0 to top-15 ranked Tufts. Despite the loss, Saturday was filled with teary-eyed celebrations of the three graduating seniors, **Chellsa Ferdinand**, **Gigi Alper** and **Beth Neal**.

Tufts came out with a fiery start, dominating the first set right from the first serve. Middlebury showed resilience as the set continued, with flashes of brilliance on defense from Alper, who has preserved her high-ranking number of digs per set. She rounded out the weekend with a solid mark of 5.64, landing her a second place slot in the conference.

In the second set, the Panther offense began to find their stride. **Maggie Wise '22** made her presence known with 10 kills, with her teammate **Corley Doyle '22** following close behind with nine. Wise, too, topped the conference leaderboards, finishing up the weekend with 3.10 kills per set, adding up to 220 on the season, earning her fourth place in each category. Tufts was able to overcome these impressive performances and steal the first set with a two-point margin. The Jumbos capitalized on their momentum and picked up the following set to close out the contest.

FIELD HOCKEY

By MIGUEL ESPINOSA
Sports Editor



BENJY RENTON / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

First-ranked Field Hockey suffered its first loss of the season at sixth-ranked Tufts, 1-0, on Saturday, Oct. 26. The Panthers' 20-game winning streak, which had been extended since last season, has ended. Middlebury's overall record drops to 13-1 and is tied for first in the NESCAC with Bowdoin. Tufts, meanwhile, maintains the second-best overall record at 13-2 and is tied with Williams.

Middlebury also notched close victories against Trinity and St. John Fisher, 3-2 and 2-1, on Oct. 19 and Oct. 20, respectively. For their final regular season game on Tuesday, Oct. 29, the Panthers downed Williams, 2-1.

MEN'S SOCCER

By ERIK ARVIDSSON
Sports Writer

MICHAEL BORENSTEIN / THE MIDDLEBURY

Men's soccer lost at reigning national champion Tufts, 2-1, on Saturday, Oct. 26. The first score of the game came in the 63rd minute when **Drew Goulart '20** gave the Panthers the lead on a free kick. While the Panthers fought hard to keep Tufts out of the back of the net, Jumbos forward Gavin Tasker scored the equalizing goal with 10 minutes left in regulation, thus extending the match into overtime. Tufts scored the walkoff goal in the eighth minute and gave the Panthers their second loss of the season.

Regardless of Tufts prowess on the national stage, the loss hurt for the Panthers. "Even though you're going up against one of the top teams in the country, it was a back and forth fight, both teams had our chances, so it was a disappointing result," captain **Aidan Robinson '20** said.

The Panthers hosted their final regular season game on Tuesday, Oct. 29 against Williams and tied in double overtime. Middlebury's conference record now stands at three wins, two losses and five ties.

Burlington girls soccer team kicks equal pay into worldwide spotlight

Equal pay campaign garners worldwide attention after yellow card issued at game

COURTESY PHOTO

Members of the Burlington High School girls soccer team celebrated after a recent game this fall with their #equalpay jerseys. The team's jersey campaign has caught the attention of media around the globe.

By BENJY RENTON
Senior Local Editor

After the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team's success in this year's Women's World Cup and the team's fight for equal pay captivated millions around the world, the Burlington High School (BHS) girls soccer team decided to take their inspiration to a new level. Beginning with a campaign to sell jerseys bearing the hashtag #equalpay for a game under the lights at Burlington on Friday, Oct. 18, their message for equal pay for women has since garnered national and international media attention, including appearances on "Good Morning America," NBC News and CNN's "Anderson Cooper Full Circle."

The idea for the jerseys started over the summer, with the U.S. women's national soccer team victory and subsequent lawsuit against U.S. Soccer for equal pay compared to their male counterparts. Members of the Burlington team initially planned for a team dress-up day with fabric markers, but ended up partnering with Change the Story VT to make and sell jerseys. They donated proceeds from the jersey sales to the Greater Burlington Girls Soccer League (GBGSL), a recreational soccer league for young girls in the area with which many members of the team grew up playing.

Maia Vota, one of the team's captains and a senior at BHS, created a short promotional video in advance of the equal pay game.

"At the time, the goal was to get a lot of people wearing the equal pay jerseys for our game [last] Friday and see how many people we could get out there wearing them," Vota said. In the project's early stages, the boys soccer team at BHS also wore the jerseys, while warming up at a recent game.

Change the Story helped take the project to the next level, she said.

"I think working with Change the Story was really helpful in teaching us how to reach out to sponsors, getting the language we could use and building up our confidence," she said.

Change the Story is a state-wide initiative of three partner organizations that aims to fast-track women's economic status in the state, according to Consultant for Strategy & Partnerships Jessica Nordhaus. Over the past few years, the initiative has collected data and found that the Vermont wage gap between women and men is 16 cents, slightly lower than other states in the nation.

Nordhaus noted that the wage gap in Vermont has been hovering between 14 and 17 cents for the last 10–15 years, meaning that on average, women make between 83 and 86 cents for every dollar a man makes.

"We're not making progress quickly enough and closing it," she told The Campus.

Some calculations have the gender wage gap in Vermont not closing until 2048, and the World Economic Forum says the gender pay gap will take over 200 years to close.

"Our stake in this is that we want Maia and Lydia and their teammates and all girls their age when they're in the workforce to be paid equally and valued equally," Nordhaus said.

A yellow card for equal pay

Friday night's game was not only the debut of the equal pay jerseys — it was also the team's senior night and last regular season game before the playoffs. The Seahorses played their crosstown rivals, South Burlington High School, and the score remained 0–0 for until less than five minutes to play, when senior Helen Worden scored a goal at the back of the net. In celebration, several of the players peeled off their blue uniforms and showed their equal pay jerseys to a roaring crowd.

Lydia Sheeser, a freshman at BHS and Nordhaus' daughter, said the decision to take off her jersey was spontaneous.

"In the excitement we wanted to celebrate with our fans on this big night," she said.

The moment came at a cost, however, since any player who takes off her jersey off during a game automatically earns a yellow card. This was frustrating in the moment, Sheeser said, but she and her teammates were excited in the aftermath.

"I heard the crowd behind us chanting 'equal pay,' and that was really empowering to know that there was everyone behind us," she said.

With 1:48 left in the game, South Burlington answered BHS's lead with a corner kick, bringing the score to a 1–1 tie. While the game ended, the energetic crowd brought the atmosphere to a whole new level.

"Everyone was really amped up that it was the night to recognize the equal pay jerseys," Vota said.

The team sold #equalpay jerseys at the game, and they are now available online. Each one costs $25, while men are invited to pay an extra $4.80 for the shirts, representing Vermont's gender wage gap.

After Friday's game, many of the players on South Burlington's team bought the jerseys as well. According to Nordhaus, one of the most notable orders of their 2,500 sold online came from the referee who penalized the team at the game.

"We saw in the comments, 'I'm the ref who gave you the yellow card. I look forward to wearing my jersey,'" she said.

With the proceeds from the jerseys, the team hopes to work with GBGSL to diversify girls' youth soccer in Burlington. Teammates hope proceeds can provide the league with some sort of transportation, mentorship or scholarship program to their younger female counterparts at GBGSL, which has previously had trouble representing the demographics of Burlington.

For the girls on the team, the connection is deeply personal.

"We had a bunch of the GBGSL girls come to our game on Friday and so we're hoping they'll see us standing up for equal pay and hopefully be inspired like we were by the U.S women's national team," Vota said.

BENJY RENTON/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The team wore the jerseys at the warmup for their quarterfinal game last Saturday.

And the crowd goes wild!

The campaign in Burlington has rippled its way through national and international media, with the team being covered in the UK's Daily Mail, CBS and NPR, among many others.

One of the earliest major news outlets to cover the story was ABC's "Good Morning America." Nordhaus was at Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy's (D) Women's Economic Opportunity Conference on Saturday, Oct. 19 in Randolph when she received a message from Sheeser and Vota saying that a camera crew would be coming up to Burlington to film the segment on Saturday night to air the next morning.

"Once we read [the message from Good Morning America], we freaked out and didn't know exactly what to do," Vota said.

The team has also garnered support of local and national politicians.

After a recent game, senior captain Maggie Barlow was at a local bagel shop near the high school and ran into John Tracy, Senator Leahy's state director in Vermont. Having heard about the campaign, "[the Leahys] bought [the jerseys] from us and took a picture of them standing in front of the Capitol with their jerseys and that was really cool," Sheeser said.

Senator Bernie Sanders (D-VT), Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Representative Peter Welch (D-VT) have chimed in, too.

"Congratulations to the Burlington High School women's soccer team on taking this courageous step," Sanders tweeted on Monday. "Where can I get one of these shirts?" Gillibrand asked on Twitter. "Kirsten — I'll see you on the floor in a few minutes during the votes and will fill you in about the team's #EqualPay jersey project," Leahy replied.

Tennis legend Billie Jean King and professional soccer players and former Women's World Cup stars Mia Hamm and Brandi Chastain also expressed their support for the team. "A great first step toward a sustainable future for ALL women's sports, & limitless careers for women in athletics," King tweeted. "Proud of you!" Chastain said.

Even Hillary Clinton weighed in on the team's drive for equal pay. "I'm with them," she said on Twitter, sharing a CNN article covering the girls' campaign.

Members of BHS' faculty, staff and administration have also been supportive of the campaign. District Superintendent Yaw Obeng sees the campaign as an incredible learning opportunity for the high school.

"This is a real live showcase of student leadership," he said. "People see them as leaders and heroes ... These are excellent examples of the type of graduates we want for our institution."

Faculty and staff have met to discuss ways they can best support members of the team in the wake of widespread media coverage, including making guidance counselors available and even turning the assistant principal's office into a communication headquarters for interviews and live broadcasts. "Really giving the girls the space and platform has been huge," District Communications Specialist Russ Elek said.

Obeng is happy that students have found a way to join the national conversation, and said that the campaign serves as a reminder for his district's ongoing compensation and diversity planning initiatives.

"These are our kids. These are Burlington kids. This is what Burlington students stand for," he said. "This is the real litmus test if we're actually cultivating the type of courageous people we want."

Hitting close to home

In addition to fulfilling over 2,500 jersey orders from all over the world, the team intends to continue the fight for equal pay in the future. "I think most importantly, this issue isn't just about soccer, and it's really important we keep this going after the season ends," Vota said. "From what I've heard from the team, everybody's on board to do that."

The team currently wears the jerseys warming up before and cooling down after their games and has advanced to the semifinal of the Vermont Principals' Association Division I state tournament.

With the help of Change the Story, the team anticipates going on a tour around the state to help inspire other young women to do the same.

Although the wage gap does not currently affect the girls on the team, the campaign for equal pay resonates with them in deeply personal ways. "In the end we realized that we just want equal recognition," Sheeser said. "It's a pretty personal cause because it's going to be affecting us directly in a few years," referring to their entry into the professional sphere post-graduation.

"This soccer team and these young women certainly qualify as changemakers," Nordhaus said. "We have been very inspired by them and we just couldn't be more honored to support their efforts."

Like many of her teammates, Vota looks up to the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team. "Knowing that they're not being paid equally has me sit back and realize, 'Where am I going to be when I'm that age?'" she said.

With their jersey campaign, the girls soccer team hopes to inspire those around the world to take a stand for equal pay.

"It's so cool to see people on the national level take interest in this but it's equally amazing to see that people in Vermont are also wanting to keep up with what's happening," Sheeser said.

"I know that's a little bit scary to look into my future and see that I'm not going to be making what I'm truly earning," she added.

COURTESY PHOTO

A crowd of BHS fans and the girls soccer team showed support for the equal pay campaign.

BENJY RENTON/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The BHS girls soccer team has now advanced to the semifinals of the state tournament.